LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

EVANGELISM ON TARGET:
A PROPOSAL TO USE HUNTING AND FISHING AS MEANS
TO EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Theological Seminary
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for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By
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PREFACE

A “Thank You” is appropriate for those who deserve it. Great appreciation is lavished upon my wife, Mary, for the willingness to encourage this project. Certainly she is vested heavily in this endeavor. Thanks to Melissa Sherron for taking on the job of editing and helping with the structure of the paper. Karen Robb, my sister, gave constructive critical suggestions which helped greatly. Dr. Mike Mitchell the mentor for the project deserves great commendation as well as does Dr. Scott Hawkins the reader. All in all this was a team effort.

A major goal of this five year quest has been for knowledge. The desire to stay fresh in ministry and the conviction that relevant methods must be sought for effective ministry motivated the beginning and the completion of this effort. The classes, classmates, projects, papers, books, new friends and especially the professors which gave knowledge and practical ways to utilize what was learned all helped to achieve these goals.

How has this project impacted the student? The methods recommended in this project have been approved by the board of the church currently being served by the author. The following activities are now planned and scheduled as a part of the ministry of First Baptist Church, Monroe, IA at this writing: a hunter education class with the cooperation of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources; a Wild Turkey Basic Seminar with the cooperation of the National Wild Turkey Federation, The Wheelin’ Sportsmen® of the NWTF will also present their ministry to the physically challenged at this event; a Talkin’ Turkey Rendezvous featuring free chili will be offered before the beginning of the Iowa Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Season begins.
God has led the author and his son to begin an outdoor ministry called SkyQuest Outdoors. The purpose of this new service is to connect people with the Creator utilizing the outdoor experience. The first event offered by SkyQuest Outdoors is planned for April of 2007, and is being promoted as Turkey Camp ‘07. Slots are available for 12 hunters and the hunt will be conducted on public and private land. Guides, room and board, and some give-aways are planned for the event.

Speaking at game dinners and rendezvous is included in the scope of this new ministry. Both partners in SkyQuest Outdoors have conducted such seminars, and more opportunities are scheduled at this writing. Several other churches are being assisted who wish to use hunting and fishing to reach people for the Lord. God is using this project for his intended purposes, and it is a joy to partner with him in the effort of winning people and advancing his kingdom.
Abstract

Evangelism on Target: A Proposal to Use Hunting and Fishing as Means to Evangelism

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Reach people where they are. The purpose of this project is to identify, explore, evaluate and recommend practical means of using hunting and fishing as tools of evangelism and discipleship. A review of printed literature reveals little about this subject. Other available information shows effective use of these means for the proposed purposes. The research utilized responses to questionnaires completed by pastors, seminary students, seminary graduates, and outdoor speakers who employ these means. Hunting and fishing are being used effectively for these goals. Practical methods for implementation of these means are explored and presented.

Abstract length: 94 word
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sighting in a weapon is critical for hunting success. The weapon of choice must be adjusted so that it hits the desired impact point on the target. Whether the chosen weapon is a bow or a firearm this step cannot be ethically exempted from the pre-hunt routine. If the weapon is not zeroed to the target with the ammunition that will be used, the effect will be undesirable. Game will be missed, or worse yet, game will be only wounded and left un-recovered to suffer an agonizing and painful death or permanent injury.

Over thirty years of experience and observation in church/parish ministry leads this researcher to a sad conclusion that most churches and believers are missing the mark in evangelism and discipleship. The zeroing process needs to be applied to the process of evangelism. Programs that were effective many years ago are routinely carried out with the expectation that success will be realized. However, many times the results do not meet the expectations. Sometimes the people or the place is blamed and we call it or them “hard to reach.” Most often the disciples of Christ would rather shift the blame of ineffective evangelism to some source other than themselves or their methods. The sights of modern evangelistic efforts need to be re-zeroed! They need to be adjusted so we are effective and hitting the target of evangelism commanded by Christ. Methods must change for evangelism to be effective today. The contemporary believer must explore new means of evangelism which are relevant to the times. To reach an ever-changing world this is paramount. Not only is the culture changing, but the people who comprise it are changing. Believers must adjust the sights and refocus the efforts in reaching people where they are rather than waiting for them to come to the church.
This project is all about reaching people where they are. Is it Biblical to adapt our methods? The premise is that hunting and fishing should be used in ministry. A common phrase among sportsmen is “I am going to go hunting.” Or they may say, “I am going to go fishing.” The lesson is that they expect to “go” someplace to hunt or fish; they do not expect the game animal or the fish to come to them. Lost people must be intentionally sought out where they are. They most often will not be in church on Sunday morning. Outdoors people, for example, will likely be outdoors.

Sadly, the average believer seldom shares his faith. The desire for political correctness is not new. The believer has been demonstrating this philosophy for centuries. Many have taken to heart the often repeated adage, “Never speak about religion to another,” while some wait to be sought out by a lost person before speaking. Most will never speak up even when given an open invitation to share Christ, and tragically, most never see another converted to Christ as a result of their testimony. Many Christians have few friends outside the community of believers, and some pastors actively discourage their members from any interaction with non-believers. Separation from the world is stretched to an extreme which God never intended. There is a danger that this world would force its imprint upon the believer, but all who live on the earth must have interaction with the people of the world. In fact, that is expected, and is one reason that God leaves the believer on the earth after conversion. We are to use our time here to foster the purposes of Christ and the Kingdom of God. We are to be in the world but not buy into the philosophy of the world.

Reach people where they are. The words immediately following are to justify and encourage believers to go and reach the people around them intentionally. Methods of
doing this should include hunting and fishing. People who hunt and fish share a common passion to speak about their shared experiences. If people love to hunt and fish, use it as a common interest to initiate and to develop friendships. Go to the field or out on the water with them. Do something to reach them where they are. Jesus did so, and this method is modeled by others in the Scripture.

The greatest example of reaching people where they are is Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus came to this earth to reach people with God’s message of forgiveness. This offer of eternal salvation is clear from Scripture, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Lk 19:10 NIV

Jesus entered human history at a pre-determined time to reach people. Though he remained eternally God, he added a human nature to his deity and became the God-man. He did this in order to glorify the Heavenly Father by providing redemption for sinful humans. He came with a mission that was assigned him by the Heavenly Father. That mission was to reach into the lives of people and bring them to a personal realization that they needed the forgiveness of sin. Jesus was willing to become the perfect sacrifice for the sin of all humans. He went to Calvary and paid the price for lost humans to be reconciled to God. The Bible states, “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.” 2 Cor 5:21 NLT By this personal example Jesus challenges us to go to people where they are.

Jesus is the perfect example of being contemporary, relevant, and with the times. The Lord received to himself a specific human identity during a specific time in human history. He did this in order to reach humans where they were. Still today he is willing to reach the lost where they are, and where they can be found regarding their own
interests and desires. He wore the clothes of the day, ate the food of the times, and fulfilled the expectations and requirements of the Jewish people.

God has set forth a clear testimony of his existence in the created world and the universe. This is important evidence of God’s reaching people where they are. God continually reveals his nature and power through natural revelation. The message of his existence is discernable by all people. Most outdoor enthusiasts clearly understand that God exists, and they understand this at a deeper and more personal level than most.

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who push the truth away from themselves. For the truth about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God. Rom 1:18-20 NLT

**Using Common Needs and Interests to Open Dialogue**

A beautiful example of using a need and an interest to open dialogue is in the story of the woman at Jacob’s Well. This story is related in the Gospel of John, chapter four. We will call her the Samaritan from here forward. Jesus’ clear purpose from the surrounding verses is evangelism. The Samaritan believes on him, and brings others who put their trust in him as well. One person’s physical need is utilized to meet the spiritual needs of multiplied others. In this case, the Samaritan would have been an enemy because of the cultures of the day. There was no previous relationship between her and the Lord. Not only did the culture prevent Samaritans conversing with Jews, but it also precluded men speaking with women other than their own wives or near relatives.

Jesus used the Samaritan’s physical need for water to open discourse with her. The need for water is shared by all humans. The supply of this need was one that
demanded significant effort in that geographical setting. “When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” Jn 4:7 NIV

Thus the conversation began. He followed this initial contact with other questions which guided the dialogue to her spiritual interests and then to her spiritual needs. He skillfully influenced the conversation to discuss her beliefs and views of spirituality and worship, leading her to a fuller appreciation of her own needs. “Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’” Jn 4:10 NIV

The conversation has now been skillfully redirected by Jesus from a physical need to a spiritual need. He moves on to the Gospel, identifying himself as the Messiah of God and the one who could meet her spiritual need for living water. This living water would last for eternity. We find a beautiful lesson and the approval of needs based or interest based methods of contact from Jesus’ personal example.

A second example of a dialogue begun from personal interests is in the calling of the apostles. Jesus used their method of livelihood to introduce this special mission. These men were fishermen by vocation. Jesus used familiar terminology and everyday knowledge to call them. He specifically instructs them regarding their call and commission to ministry as his own special apostles. “‘Come, follow me,’” Jesus said, “‘and I will make you fishers of men.’” Mk 1:17 NIV The following translation sheds a bit more light on this application for us. “Jesus called out to them, ‘Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!’” Mt 4:19 NLT

These stories certainly substantiate the proposal to use hunting and fishing as a means of opening a dialogue with people. In both of these clear Bible stories we see the
use of common interests and/or needs to foster God’s purposes and plans in the lives of people. Once this dialogue is begun it may be developed. On-going conversation may be used to deepen relationships with people and foster evangelistic purposes. These same relationships may be used effectively for discipleship purposes after conversion.

**Recreation is Important in Our Society**

Recreation has become a major value and emphasis to this generation. Outdoor pursuits captivate large numbers of people, both as participants and as observers. It is impossible to categorize either the participants or the observers of these activities. Families and individuals prioritize both time and money for these recreational, avocational pursuits. The economic impact of sports on modern America dramatically emphasizes this point as revealed in the question and answer below which was published on the US State Department’s website.

**Q:** Given the importance of free enterprise in American society, how significant a portion of the U.S. economy does the sports sector represent?

**A:** If you're talking, first of all, about the big four [professional] sports leagues - basketball, football, baseball, and hockey - together they're probably somewhere on the order of $10 to $15 billion in revenue, in an economy that's almost $11 trillion in size. If you begin to add some of the other events outside the orbit of those four - golf, NASCAR [auto racing], college sports - then you're doubling the figure to somewhere in the neighborhood of $30 billion. So by one reckoning or another, it's a very small part of the economic output of the United States.¹

The figures above reveal the great impact of sports upon modern culture. Though to some they may comprise a small portion of the entire economic output of our society, in most minds these are major amounts of money. These figures do not take into

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consideration some of the largest contributors to the sporting industry such as hunting and fishing.

A love and commitment to hobbies and sports manifests itself throughout one’s entire life. Sports-focused pastimes are emphasized from the cradle to the grave. Programs oriented toward sports are available from pre-elementary school through college and in all stages of life after the school years.

All through the school years, sports are idolized and exalted. Children begin little league baseball, softball, soccer, golf and numerous other sports younger with each succeeding generation. These hobbies continue to be promoted through classes teaching the fundamentals at the junior college and college levels. These classes sometimes generate academic credit as well as instruction in the practical skills needed to excel in that particular sport. Energetic and enthusiastic support from parents, grand parents, and other family stresses the importance of succeeding in this area.

Central Iowa is a microcosm of other areas of the country. People here mirror this fanatical commitment to high school and other sports. These pursuits involve all ages, entire families, and both sexes. This fanaticism often extends to the hunting of big game animals such as deer and wild turkey. These traditions run deep and are highly valued. Upland bird hunting which focuses on pheasant hunting runs closely on the heels of big game hunting in bringing friends and family together again and again.

People invest resources, time and money into what they value. Hunting enthusiasts epitomize this commitment to sports at a high, and at times fanatical, level. Hunting and fishing as avocations continue to enjoy enthusiastic growth. The economic investment of those who pursue game and the resources which they dedicate to this
pursuit clearly demonstrates the importance of these interests. The figures below demonstrate the economic impact of hunting.

The top five states by annual retail sales of hunting related products:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>$1.7 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>$1.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>$960 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>$981 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>$799 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another group showing a radical commitment to their avocation is the fisherman. There is an amazing abundance of species of fish to be enjoyed today. Numbers of people pursue the sport of fishing here and internationally. The statistics prove the importance of fishing to our economy, and to the culture in general.

As big as hunting is in America, fishing is even bigger. There are 44.3 million anglers that contribute to an estimated $116 billion overall economic output in the U.S. The average angler spends over $1,200 every year on the sport. That includes $41.5 billion in retail sales and $7.3 billion in state and federal taxes. The fishing industry supports over 1 million jobs in America and $30 billion in wages (more than created by corporate giants like Microsoft, Nike or Ford).

Business ventures that furnish products and supplies to these enthusiasts continue to mushroom and to grow, seemingly exponentially. The growth of these new businesses illustrates the popularity of sports and recreation. Though some of these businesses may

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fail, the desire of the public for recreational products and services will continue to grow. The growth of the sports related industry seems secure.

A real catalyst in the promotion of hunting and fishing has come from programming on satellite and cable television. Both cable and satellite providers are scrambling to include more of this programming. Optional channels are now dedicated full time to outdoor recreational activities which stress or feature hunting and fishing.

Since the culture of the day is so focused and committed to the pursuit of sports and recreation, the religious communities and organizations should investigate, evaluate and if warranted, plan the use of specific methods that utilize these interests for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship. In fact, the research for this endeavor reveals that there is a plethora of opportunity for ministry in these pursuits.

Television and radio programs that feature hunting and fishing are often hosted and produced by people who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. These people often give specific personal testimony of their own faith in Christ during their programming. In addition, they make it a major goal to offer clear explanations of the Gospel. Contact information is provided to the interested viewer so those interested may receive more information about a personal relationship with God.

The author’s own commitment and interest in hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits makes the idea of using these passions in ministry one of particular interest and value. Personal participation in outdoor activities began at a very early age and love of these diversions was based upon outdoor times enjoyed by the writer with his father. Opening day of pheasant hunting season in Iowa was a shared and greatly anticipated event. This special day was seldom forfeited, no matter the reason. Influential and
valuable relationships were established and strengthened during these outings. The love of dogs and birds became firmly entrenched, and those times with Dad will always be cherished. The lessons learned regarding safety, the stewardship of natural resources, and the greatness of God were results of these times afield.

This bonding and learning experience is common with many outdoors people. This is what sets hunting and fishing as a high priority in the lives of many. These shared experiences develop relationships that are powerful and deeply influential and that hold true for families as well as friends.

Any one who has had the privilege of participating in a fishing trip or a hunting camp clearly understands the depth and quality of relationships that are empowered by these shared experiences. Many will return for succeeding years to enjoy such connection and camaraderie. The quality of such relationships engenders communication and trust that few other activities can ever accomplish. These relationships are similar in scope and depth to those of people who have served in the military and experience the esprit des corps inherent in military service. The friendships established through shared hunting experiences are very much like ones shared by those who have experienced combat together. Participants understand very well the emotion and dedication that can result from such a shared experience. These relationships may be utilized for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship with powerful results.

It is the author’s goal and hope that methods identified and outlined in this project will encourage and mobilize the development and use of specific programs and ministries focused on hunting and fishing for the Biblical purposes of evangelism and discipleship. It is further hoped that the methods proposed might be usable with other sports,
recreational activities, and outdoor pursuits for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship.

**The Problem**

The first question is, may hunting and fishing be legitimately used for God’s purposes? Secondly, if this question is answered in the affirmative, how may they be utilized as means to evangelism and discipleship? This project will explore and evaluate several means to this end. The goal is to recommend three specific ways of using hunting and fishing to disciple and evangelize.

The need for this project is clear as the author has observed the traditional Bible-believing church long being lax in using relevant methodology. This is particularly true in presenting the message of redemption to the lost. The past reveals a general commitment to traditionalism rather than to truth as a measure of methodology. Often potentially effective methods of evangelism have been prejudiced by the past.

Man-made traditions have supplanted the timeless truth, the commandments, and the commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to his church and his disciples. Positions which champion “what men say God said” which are mere traditions, and “what God said” which is truth, have long been debated. These man-centered opinions cause conflict and division in the body of Christ. The basis of these objections is usually in personal opinion and personal preference rather than Biblical truth. The result is that many are using methods which are generations behind the current culture. This leaves the impression that Christ and the church are out of date, irrelevant, and not to be genuinely considered as a resource of significant influence.
A large problem not appropriately addressed by today’s church is that of reaching people who are difficult to reach. Outdoors people are hard to reach. The average outdoor enthusiast has a strong tie with creation and created things. They sense a Creator by personal observation. The ardent pursuit of their favorite activities often is a sign that they are missing something in life. They mistakenly think the creation can meet this need, but only a personal love relationship with the Creator, the God of the Bible can fully satisfy this hunger. Appropriate methods to reach them must be developed, as conventional approaches to evangelism will not work with many of these people. They are difficult to reach since they pursue their outdoor passions during the same times and on the same days that most churches and ministries conduct their regular services.

There is a theological and practical methodology being practiced in some circles to reach these who may be unreachable by other traditional means. That method involves relationship building using common interests. The goal is to earn the privilege to share the Gospel with them. In this study, the use of hunting and fishing will be emphasized as a common interest to establish and enable such relationships.

Men, women, youth, and children are being reached by utilizing the outdoor pursuits. As research began on this project, a number of individuals, ministries, churches, and organizations were identified as breaking through the paradigms of past thought and methods. Some of the efforts are right on target, focused on a specific audience and what needs to be accomplished. Others have a more general burden to reach people but with less specific goals and purposes.
Examples of Success

At this point in the paper the reader may wonder if this method is practical, if it works. The research revealed that hunting and fishing for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship are being used effectively. Below are just two examples of success in this arena.

The first example is the Sportspersons International Ministries™ centered in Kentwood, MI. Reverend Maury De Young founded and directs this organization, and his focus is to utilize the outdoor experience to generate contact with individuals who would never consider attending a church service. A person’s interest in the outdoors (i.e. hunting, fishing, archery, fly tying, etc.) is used as a means to develop relationships. De Young’s ministry has been in existence since 1991, and has reached hundreds with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

De Young’s unique approach to evangelism and discipleship demands more investigation, and is a model of success. He utilizes a monthly meeting called a Sportsperson’s Club where a variety of outdoor subjects draw people to these regular events. Commitment to this ministry is evidenced by the conversion of a large area of the church basement into an indoor archery range. Some events planned and performed use competition to attract people. De Young has determined to help others understand the why and the how of conducting events for ministry and his organization provides seminars for those who want to utilize outdoor ministry in their own churches. These are conducted annually in the early spring. A search of their website will reveal the dates of the next scheduled seminar. This website may be located at www.spi-int.org.
A second example of success is the Sportsmen’s Adventure®. A team of volunteers comprised of lay people and pastors plans and promotes this yearly affair. The event is a ministry of the Iowa Association of Regular Baptist Churches (IARBC) and is used primarily for the purpose of evangelism.

The Adventure’s ultimate purpose is to provide an activity to invite unsaved friends to, where they can enjoy the seminars and a dinner while hearing a clear Gospel message. Often these individuals would never accept an invitation to church, but they will readily attend this type of event. God has shown His blessing on this outreach since the very beginning.4

Hunting and fishing oriented seminars which teach outdoor skills are important draws. A game dinner prepared and served by volunteers is the culmination of the day. Many door prizes add excitement and anticipation. Hunter education classes have been furnished the last three years as a promotion and as a public service.

The attendance has been growing by ten percent each year, and the 2006 event experienced its largest attendance of approximately eight hundred. A larger attendance was expected at the 2007 event, so the location was moved to a larger and more accessible facility. The new venue is the Varied Industries Building located on the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Unfortunately, extremely cold weather prevented many from attending this event. The 2007 attendance was virtually the same as the previous year. The emphasis and plan is for those who are believers to invite friends who are not. Does it work? At the 2007 event, thirty two men indicated new faith in Christ.

Last year a father brought his two grown sons on a two-hour drive to the activities at Faith Baptist Bible College. On the way down they talked about daily life. On the way back they were discussing both sons’ new life in Christ! And one year a man, his son, and his grandson all accepted Christ at the event.5

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5Ibid.
The key speakers are often noted outdoors personalities who have particular skills and whose presence will draw people to the event. These people are always believers who share the Gospel and draw the net to encourage a personal commitment to Christ. These events have experienced enthusiastic participation as well as large numbers of people who indicate a decision to trust Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

This event enables believers to build relationships with unbelievers through a fun and exciting time focused upon mutual interests, namely hunting and fishing. Focus groups conducted with those in the organizational leadership of the Sportsmen’s Adventure do believe that many of those invited would never respond favorably to an invitation to attend a church service. That is why the leaders invest so much time, energy, and effort to enable the success of this event.

Although outdoor enthusiasts generally have a low opinion of organized religion, they do have a strong awareness of the existence of a Creator. This sense comes by what they observe and experience of the order and beauty of the universe. This awareness can be used as a springboard to introduce the creator, Jesus Christ, into their lives. After conversion, they can be drawn to events which will develop them into fully committed disciples of Jesus Christ.

The conclusion of this project is that hunting and fishing are legitimate means of evangelism and discipleship. Those using them so are experiencing great success. The prayer of the author is that God will publish these means for his purposes of evangelism and discipleship.
Review of the Literature

The subject of evangelism and discipleship is so widely addressed as to need little authentication. Many works constructed from a variety of vantage points give ample attestation to the need and validity of relevant methods regarding both evangelism and discipleship. Most of these sources refer specifically to the need to be flexible and relevant in the use of methodology to reach our post modern target audience.

Some authors were breaking up this fallow ground of relevance in ministry nearly forty years ago. The specifics of using camping and other recreational activities are clearly shown in the following works. Some of the following will have limited application to hunting and fishing and deal more generally with recreation. Some works addressing these subjects are: Bob M. Boyd, *Recreation for Churches*; Ray Conner, *The Ministry of Recreation*; John LaNoue, *A Guide to Church Camping*; Charles L. Mand, *Outdoor Education: New Designs in Health, Physical Education and Recreation*; Bill Maness, *Recreation Ministry: A Guide for all Congregations*.

In addition to the books listed above, there have been a number of works of more recent origin which further the efforts begun in the past. This is clearly reflected in recently authored books, articles, electronic resources, and websites. This growing interest in using hunting, fishing, and other recreational pursuits as means of evangelism and discipleship is revealed in the abundance of recent efforts. This partial list illustrates the growing interest. Maury De Young, *Hunting and Fishing With a Mission: Conference 2005 Notebook*; John Garner, ed. *Recreation and Sports Ministry: Impacting Postmodern Culture*; Daniel McLean, Amy R. Hurd, and Nancy Brattain Rogers, *Kraus'
Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society; Elmer Towns and Warren Bird, Into the Future: Turning Today's Church Trends into Tomorrow's Opportunities.

A number of websites have articles which document the use of these means for our very purposes. Some of these are specifically focused upon ministry for the purposes expressed in this research. A sample list is included below.

4 Outdoorsmen Ministries. Website, http://www.4outdoorsmen.net/index.html
Adventure Bound Outdoors. Website, http://www.adventureboundoutdoors.com
SkyQuest Outdoors. Website, http://www.skyquestoutdoors.com
Sportsmen’s Adventure. Website, http://www.sportsmensadventure.org
The Fig Tree. Website, http://www.thefigtree.org/mission/html

Thesis and other papers have addressed issues impacting this subject. Two of those are listed below as sources for information relevant to this study. Ho Kyung Kim’s “The Biblical Approach to Church Growth Through Personal Evangelism.” and Thomas D. Mullins’ “Coaching as a Leadership Model for Ministry in the 21st Century Church.”

The resources listed above reveal just a small sample of the literature and printed materials that are available to research this subject. The subject is timely and important. There is plenty of information available to substantiate research and conclusions.

The Scope and Limitations of the Project

Three practical recommendations will be proposed as methods which may be used for outreach. The plan is to present specific guidelines that will allow an individual, a church, or any other ministry-focused group to develop a plan for their own event and to perform it with success. The recommended events are addressed from this point on as the
game dinner, the rendezvous, and the challenge. They are introduced and described below in the Recommendations section and further under Definitions.

Recommendations

The use of a game dinner is the foremost recommendation. These are one evening or one day seminars that focus upon hunting, fishing, or related skills. This format is being widely used with tremendous success in most areas of the United States. The goal of such events is excitement and fun which will enable contact with people who normally do not attend a church, but who enjoy the outdoor experience. An additional purpose is to offer believers an easily used format to invite their friends.

The second recommendation is for the use of rendezvous events. The definition of the word for this purpose is meant to be plural, not singular, as these events should be on-going and offered several times per year. The author recommends monthly offerings. At the least these gatherings should be regular and different in their subject matter so they may draw the same people again and again. The development of long and trusted relationships is the goal of these events. Called clubs by some, for these purposes the term rendezvous will be used. It is an old term going back to the days of the mountain men and plainsmen.

The final event that is recommended is the challenge event which involves some type of competition or contest focused on outdoor skills. Parent-child fishing events, archery contests, and trap shoots have been used with success. These fun times will draw participants who enjoy the competition and the food. Challenge events include an evangelistic emphasis but are not pushy in presenting the Gospel.

The main purpose of all these events will be on developing contact and growing relationships with people that will engender and enable speaking Christ into their lives. Though the focus of this project is primarily upon hunting and fishing, the author
recommends that the general framework and methods furnished for planning such events be utilized to plan, promote, and perform similar events which could feature a variety of activities, sports and recreational pursuits as the main draw.

Definitions

For continuity, “game dinners” will describe one day or one evening events which draw people through the use of hunting and fishing. These banquets may focus upon specific skills or subjects common to these themes. The events normally include the provision of a dinner that is part of the appeal of the event.

“Rendezvous” will refer to events that repeat regularly for further development of relationships with the target audience. These could focus upon a variety of outdoor subjects for their appeal. They normally are conducted in a short period of time. They usually will include the use of food, but very minor offerings such as snacks, cookies, and beverages.

“Challenges” will define randomly hosted events which focus upon competition of some kind. They are for fun and for skill development. These events will have the primary purpose of the game dinner, but will be smaller in scale and effort. They will utilize food, but not normally a full meal.

The “gospel” will refer to the Bible-focused offer of forgiveness of sin provided in the completed work of Jesus Christ. That people may be reconciled to God and enjoy a personal love relationship with God is good news. The presentation of this good news is the ultimate goal of this project. People become comfortable with many ways to present the gospel, just as fly fishers learn many ways to present a fly to a trout. God also uses many differing ways to draw people to salvation, but the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, his death, burial, and resurrection is the heart of the gospel. People can be
reconciled to God through faith in Christ. This is God’s unique means of saving people, yet the way it is presented will differ. The message may not be altered else it becomes another message. Yet the methods of presentation will differ wonderfully.

“Evangelism” will be any effort or method that has the goal of speaking the gospel of Christ into the lives of people while maintaining obedience to other Biblical mandates. The targets of evangelism are those who do not have a personal love relationship with God. The goal is to offer the gospel and to influence individuals to accept the gospel by personally believing in Jesus Christ. After placing their trust in him, discipleship will follow.

The term “discipleship” will focus on the spiritual growth and development of those individuals evangelized into fully committed disciples of Jesus Christ. Anything that will influence the formation of the character of Christ in a person will be considered discipleship. This process should bring spiritual maturity characterized by a life of obedience to God. “Discipleship” does not refer to the original twelve men that Jesus called his “Apostles” and gave a special office and mission.

“Outreach” was originally considered for use as a purpose for this project, but research of the contemporary use of this word ended that consideration. The conclusion was that “outreach” was generally used in far too broad a manner for this effort. This word is being currently used to describe the publishing and promoting of just about everyone’s message, business, or political agenda. Contemporary usage ranges from selling real estate, to the offering of merchandise of all descriptions. Because of the diversity in the use of this word it was eliminated from consideration and from use in the statement of purpose for this document. Instead, the terms defined above, evangelism and discipleship, were intentionally chosen for this effort.
The intent of this project is to offer general direction and guidelines and not to offer every small or specific detail of every event that may present. These events will vary greatly with the intent, purpose, and vision of each group that seeks to utilize them. Solid assistance in the planning and performing of these events is the goal of the project and is the intent of its author. The outline in Appendix H will provide guiding questions that when answered will result in a plan for an event.

The Holy Bible will be quoted in various places in this work. The two translations used will be the New International Version (NIV hereafter) and the New Living Translation (NLT hereafter).

Statement of Methodology

Research was conducted using questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and online research tools. Basic research methods have been used to gather opinions, responses, and data which apply to this problem. The reading and review of books, periodicals, and websites have also been utilized. The nuances of the problem necessitated the heavy use of online research. There was ample material online that documented the use of outdoor activities or sports for evangelism and discipleship. Solutions to the current problem have been explored and evaluated, and those selected have been recommended and further developed in chapter six. The forms used in the research portion are included in Appendices A, B, C, D, E, and F in the back matter. Results from the questionnaires have been tabulated manually. Responses are presented in percentages rather than numerically to give a quicker and more accurate comparison of the data furnished by the responses to the questions.
Questionnaires

Two questionnaires have gathered a wealth of data. The first questionnaire was furnished (Appendix D) to speakers and professionals who are involved in the presentation of outdoor events which used hunting and fishing for evangelism or discipleship. These individuals are considered as outdoor experts and make part or their entire livelihood from such events or other outdoor focused activities.

The second questionnaire (Appendix E) was furnished to pastors and churches that had utilized these events for the current purposes. This last questionnaire allowed pastors to pass the instrument on to a committee chair person for completion if they delegated the planning of the event to another. Some who responded were the chair persons of such events.

Respondents from both groups were given the option of completing the form online via a hyperlink which was included in the email, or by printing a Word® or PDF document, filling it out and mailing it to the researcher. None of those completing the questionnaire used the format of manually completing the form. All used the electronic method of completing and submitting the questionnaire.

In the second main category, three pools of potential sources of information were polled. The first of these three larger groups were Doctor of Ministry students and graduates of Liberty Theological Seminary. An email was generated by the Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, Dr. Frank Schmitt. Some responses were received from this pool of possible respondents. The email used in Appendix A was the means of distributing this request.

The next group who used the second questionnaire shown in Appendix E were pastors and churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC). This request was presented on multiple occasions and by a variety
of means. It was first presented in an electronic newsletter from the national office. Later, in June, 2006 while in an annual conference in Lansing, MI, daily appeals were made for the completion of the questionnaire through the daily newsletter. Additionally, a request went out to the Iowa Association of Regular Baptist Churches (IARBC). The author’s church is in fellowship with both the IARBC and the GARBC. The response was disappointing as none of those contacted by these means responded by completing the questionnaire.

The third and final group was comprised of pastors and ministries that were referred to the writer or personally known by the author to have been involved in outdoors focused ministry of some kind. Each was directly contacted by telephone. After the phone contact, with their permission, emails were sent with hyperlinks to the web based questionnaires. Over half of those contacted responded not only completing the appropriate questionnaire, but also by adding valuable personal comments. The email used is viewable in Appendix C, and the questionnaire may be viewed in Appendix E. It is called the Outdoor Research Questionnaire.

The Speakers Questionnaire (Appendix D) was designed slightly differently to be completed by professionals, outdoor speakers, and experts with experience in this ministry. Telephone calls were made to many individuals, professionals, churches, organizations, and speakers to identify them. Some were identified through referrals, internet searches, and through advertisements in magazines, as well as from internet web pages. The phone calls were necessary as many persons did not respond to a passive request for participation. A general announcement or an anonymous email did not motivate people to respond. This fact was concluded early on by the author.
Personal Interviews

Personal interviews were conducted with those who have planned, participated in, or provided ministry at outdoor oriented events. These people included outdoor speakers, committee chair people, pastors, and professionals. Their suggestions, comments and advice have been included and utilized in the evaluation, formation, and investigation of the problem addressed herein. The interviews were recorded on cassette tapes and transcribed for use in the final product. Questions asked are in Appendix F.

Online Research

Significant amounts of time have been utilized to locate online resources. Included were websites, online magazines, reports, evaluations, lists of people, ministries, and articles. The common ground of these was the subject of using hunting or fishing as means to evangelism and discipleship. Internet searches were pursued to identify, clarify, research, understand, and to illustrate the views, attitudes, and actions of those opposed to hunting and fishing for sporting and other purposes.

Focus Groups

Gathering together focus groups comprised of those who are involved in outdoor ministry was very productive. The practical expertise gained was invaluable. The informal nature of these groups and the flexibility of them added to their helpful results. The critical advice of each individual built upon the constructive suggestions given by others in the group. The groups involved both professionals and pastors. Included in one focus group were some lay people.

Format

The data gathered has been given in prose, and responses to questions are presented in percentages to make the information more understandable. Discussion and
development of this data comprises chapter five. Limited but appropriate conclusions and recommendations have been drawn, and where possible, guidelines proposed so that events may be planned and performed which use hunting and fishing to evangelize and disciple.
CHAPTER 2

SCOUTING THE OPPPOSITION’S OBJECTIONS TO HUNTING AND FISHING

Outdoorsmen can multiply the chances of success in the field by scouting. Trips afield are indispensable for this all-important task. Discussion with other outdoorsmen, analysis of maps, general research, and personal observation of the habits and routines of the quarry are essential for the taking of game. To understand the routines of each species during each season of the year is helpful in the quest. Knowing where to find them and what they do at various times of the day or seasons of the year contributes enormously to success when in the field. All four seasons provide opportunities to accomplish this essential task.

Hunting and fishing are under attack, and the objections that are identified and defined in this chapter are evidence of this attack. Scouting is important, therefore, to understand and respond to the objections of those who are attacking hunting. Opponents are dedicated to discrediting the sports of hunting and fishing and the people who pursue them. The prevalence of these attitudes requires effort to define, understand, and answer the objections they present. To deal with all the objections would not be feasible for a project such as this, but some benefit is obtained by scouting out and understanding the opposition and seeking to answer at least some of their objections.

First, understanding the objections to hunting and fishing from the view point of the opponents is necessary to formulate a defense of the premise of this paper. The premise is that hunting and fishing may be legitimately utilized for evangelism and discipleship. If the practices of hunting and fishing cannot be defended as legitimate and valuable, then the project and its premise should be abandoned.
Second, outdoorsmen may learn and improve the practices of hunting and fishing by listening to this criticism. It is always important to consider one’s critics, as criticism usually contains at least some element of truth. Unfair criticism often begins with an observed weakness which is then twisted, exploited, or magnified to the benefit of the opponents. Sportsmen can learn from the critics, and improve the practice of their sports by applying the lessons learned. This chapter is dedicated to defining some common arguments used as objections to hunting and fishing. The actual defense will be presented in the chapters following.

In our modern culture, many object to hunting and fishing as being cruel unnecessary, and undesirable. These “antis” seem to get most of the publicity. A number of organizations champion these opinions, and actively promote anti-hunting legislation, arguments against hunting, and are very vehement in the promotion of their agendas. A visible example of such an organization is People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Their opposition to hunting and their accusations against hunters are many. They oppose the general utilization of animals for human needs in ways that extend well into the absurd. Examples of this irrationality are their opposition to the eating of eggs, the use of milk and even the use of wool from sheep to make clothing.

The first three objections commonly given by the anti hunters will be answered in chapter three. This chapter is entitled, “A Biblical Defense of Hunting and Fishing.” All three objections are impacted, addressed, or answered directly by the Scriptures. These Bible based principles will be the defense of hunting and fishing. What God says about these matters is far more authoritative than what any person or group can posit.
Many of the objections given to hunting and fishing are more emotional than matters of reality. The last four of the selected objections to hunting and/or fishing will be answered in chapter four which is entitled “A Practical Defense of Hunting and Fishing.” These objections will be considered and solid answers given to refute them. Many of the answers given in this chapter will find their credibility in the pragmatic not in the theoretical or theological arenas.

Below are listed seven of the major objections used by the antis. Their accusations are constantly being made and repeated until many believe them to be factual. Their stance against hunting and fishing should not be ignored, but understood and refuted. Defining and summarizing these objections is the immediate goal.

**Thou Shalt Not Kill**

The bottom line assumption of this objection is that hunting is the murdering of innocent animals. The objection continues along these lines, “Animals have the right to live because God created them, and to kill an animal is forbidden by the Biblical commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’”

This argument seems very important to anti-hunting adherents. On the surface it seems logical and very solid from the Bible viewpoint, but an in depth and objective look at the Scriptures reveal this premise as flawed, not based in fact. Biblical warrant for hunting will be addressed later in chapter three, including the fact that God required animal sacrifice for worship purposes.

A brief answer to this objection would be that murder is a term the Bible uses for the unjustified taking of human life. The Bible distinguishes very strongly the difference between humans and animals. Only humans have the distinguishing characteristic of
having been created in the image and likeness of God. This separates humans distinctly from animals. Since murder refers to human life only, animals cannot be murdered. These thoughts will see further development in chapter three.

**Radar O’Reilly’s Objection**

Most people are familiar with the MASH 4077 television program of the past since the reruns are still being used and are humorous to watch. On one of the episodes, Radar is referring to his guinea pigs which are being considered for use in a laboratory procedure. He vehemently objects saying something like, “Guinea pigs are people too.” This is not meant to be an exact quote, but the sentiment and the supposition is that animals have the same standing and rights as people. Their objection equates human life and animal life in value, privileges, and in the rights associated with their equal status.

This objection not only denies the right of humans to kill animals, but also denies the rights of humans to benefit from, or utilize the animals for food furnished without the animal’s death. The assumption is that animals have inherent rights which are the same as, or similar to, the rights of human beings. Emotion rules here as animals are often incorrectly bequeathed with similar characteristics, attributes, and emotions that humans enjoy and exhibit. This is very often portrayed in movies, television shows, cartoons, and many other media.

Addressing this subject from the position of those who stand opposed to hunting and angling is interesting and revealing. We find this response dealing with their definition of animal rights.

Animal rights means that animals deserve consideration of what is in their best interests---regardless of whether they are cute, useful to humans, or endangered and regardless of whether any human cares about them at all (just as a mentally challenged human has rights even if he or she is not cute, productive, or well
liked), It means recognizing that animals are not ours to use for food, clothing, entertainment, or experimentation.\(^6\)

General reading of the above quotation notes many assumptions given by these adherents. Humans and animals are clearly lumped together, equally sharing rights and privileges. The position seems to state and assume that humans and animals are on the same plane in most if not all respects. This is certainly an assumption that becomes a reality for anyone who denies the existence of God. Many assume that animals and man came to exist as a result of a naturalistic and evolutionary process. If one assumes this position and rejects creation as a fact, this position follows.

However, if creation is accepted as a fact, and if the position is then taken that God created everything, then the above assumptions are forced to change. That God created everything is the position accepted in this paper. Since this is true, then God is the final authority in addressing all these issues, and God says humans are distinct from animals.

**Hunting Causes the Unnecessary Suffering of Animals**

This strong objection is often raised by animal rights advocates. It deserves some serious discussion and consideration. After all, who would intentionally inflict unnecessary pain upon anything? The dander rises; the blood rushes to the face as this subject is mentioned, and there is merit to the argument.

These objections to hunting and fishing often extend or carry over from the animal rights or “Radar O’Reilly objection” addressed above. It is just an offshoot of that

argument with specific applications. No ethical outdoors woman or man likes to see any animal suffer unnecessarily.

Web searches come back with myriads of hits when the subject of unnecessary animal suffering is sought. Many of these articles originate in Western culture, especially that of the English speaking world. They are hot political issues. “Unnecessary animal suffering” especially focuses on that pain caused by hunters, trappers, and others who pursue game for sport. These recreational pursuits are targeted, and since objectors consider them optional, non-essential, they are set apart for stronger objections as a more ready target.

Each year billions of animals are slaughtered for food, millions more for their pelts, countless others are used in experiments, and still others are killed for sport. Anyone who eats meat or animal products needs to be aware that their dietary choices sustain an industry of suffering and murder. When you eat at McDonald’s, enjoy a breakfast of bacon, eggs and sausage or when you drink a glass of milk, you are creating the market. You are financing the pain, terror and torture that make up the short, miserable life, and inevitable death of an animal. Words like beef, pork, poultry and ham are used by meat industries to convince consumers that they are eating something other than animals. Whatever name you give your meat, you are really eating the flesh of cow, chicken, or pig corpses. Is your conscience clear?7

Certainly the emotional buy-in of these people cannot be questioned. The level of commitment to see the end of something they abhor is evident. Their reasoning is called into question in their encouragement to use “ALL MEANS NECESSARY! [sic]”8 and the advice to their fellows, “Don’t just question animal abuse. Interrogate it, impugn it,

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8Ibid
The views expressed are certainly extreme, but those strongly committed to this view of animal rights often seem this way.

The writer’s own personal feelings come to the fore in this debate. Outdoorsmen often wish there was a way to take animals, and then release them unharmed to be hunted again. Unless one is content to photograph animals, or committed entirely to catch-and-release principles, there is no practical way to take an animal with a firearm, and then to release it unharmed. The subject of animal rights and its objections will be addressed in greater detail in chapter three of this document.

**Hunting Is Unnecessary Today**

The argument goes something like this in this author’s opinion. “In the early history of this country, wild animals were needed by native Americans and by pioneers for their very existence. Today we have ample and abundant supplies of food, so hunting is not needed.” The conclusion from these premises is that hunting is unnecessary today.

This speculative opinion has no basis in fact. It is entirely subjective, based upon an emotional position chosen by those offering it. Attention will be given in chapter four as to why this argument has no weight and no basis in reality. It will be seen that hunting is a valuable and necessary tool for conservation.

While everyone is entitled to their own opinion, the rights of the individual are strengthened when the rights of others to differ are upheld, but those seeking to infringe on the rights of hunters, fishermen, trappers, and other outdoor enthusiasts are

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9Ibid
endangering their own rights. By demanding the conciliation of the rights guaranteed others by our own constitution they jeopardize their own rights.

There are a number of practical reasons why hunting is necessary today. One strong reason is for conservation purposes. Wild animals are a trust given by the Almighty. Since they are a trust, these resources require conservation and management. Certainly conservation of wildlife was included in the instructions given to the human race at creation. Hunting and fishing are tools necessary to effective conservation and management of animals and fish.

**Hunting Promotes Violence, Crime, and the Devaluing of Life**

The further society moves away from its roots in Judeo Christian foundations, the more crime becomes an issue. The few undesirables who violate game laws and poach game give fuel and a surface credibility to this anti-hunting accusation. Most outdoorsmen hold strictly to hunting laws, ethics and practices which comply with the regulations of each state and of the national government. Those who intentionally violate the law do not deserve to be referred to as hunters or as outdoors men or women. They are neither. They are simply criminals who ply their trade in the outdoors against animals and against society.

Most people in contemporary culture are not personally familiar with weapons. The majority have little or no exposure to rural life and to the reality of how food is grown and processed. This often allows them to be susceptible to arguments and reasoning that hunting promotes violence. Often the cycle of life and death in the natural world is ignored and forgotten. The following quote tells the tale all too sadly. (The spelling errors in the text are from the original document.)
Another main argument against hunting is that hunting promotes violence and that it is a bad influence on kids. Even within this segment there are various levels of belief. An radical view that is mostly promoted by the animal rights groups is that hunting is linked with crime. One man named Merrit Clifton, who founded the group Animal People said, "the high proportion of serial killers also hunt animals." Clifton in another view, also links hunting with child molestation, prostitution, and wife beating. His proposition is based on an extreme statistical study done by another animal rights person named, Stephen Kellert. A more commonplace view however, is that hunting is a bad influence on children. Recently society has viewed hunting as a sport whose only intention is to kill. Some parents are concerned that allowing their kids to hunt or to play hunting games will only corrupt their minds further.\(^\text{10}\)

In chapter four this argument will be refuted, but to the uninformed it might appear a natural association even though it is a wrong association. Hunting and fishing actually breed a respect for life and for the animals that are pursued and taken.

**Hunting Is Too Dangerous**

Again, this objection seems a credible reason to be an anti-hunting adherent. But as will be later established, the safety of hunting is clearly substantiated by statistical analysis and by practical examination. There are many activities and hobbies more dangerous than hunting.

The fact is that nearly everything in life is dangerous to a point. Life is filled with risks, some of which are assumed commonly and regularly. A number of accidental deaths occur from a vast variety of indoor and outdoor sports activities.

Many examples are commonly reported of young people and adults being killed by baseballs, contact sports, all terrain recreational vehicles (ATV’s). The most obvious culprit in taking of human lives unnecessarily is the number of deaths on the roadways of our country each year. Alcohol contributes to a large percentage of these accidents and

the deaths that result. But few anti-hunting organizations champion the abolition of alcohol, nor do they sanction the companies that provide alcoholic beverages.

**Hunting Fosters the Extinction of Animals**

Although properly controlled and regulated hunting has never resulted in the extinction of any species of wildlife, the past certainly reveals some fodder for this cannon shot. Hunters and anglers hang their heads in shame at the excesses of the past which did contribute to the extinction of some species. Often these populations were eradicated because of market hunting, the hunting of wild animals for resale to restaurants and individuals for human consumption. Much of this history occurred before appropriate regulations were legislated and enforced.

A few examples of animals that were in danger of extinction by wanton killing are the buffalo, the passenger pigeon, and the whooping crane. Other species have been decimated by unregulated hunting. Even our national symbol, the bald eagle, was endangered for a time. These are sad chapters in conservation annals.

One wonders if the influences of the anti-firearms crowd are heard in many arguments proposed by animal rights advocates. Are they opposing hunting as a means to make firearm ownership illegal? Yet an examination of facts will not bear out the conclusions of anti hunters and those opposing legal ownership of firearms. They base their objections on facts not in evidence.

In conclusion, there are many objections raised to hunting and fishing by the anti hunting crowd. They have some credible points which need to be noted and addressed by the outdoors men and women. Most of the objections have their root in the emotional
commitments of the adherents. When examined from a Biblical perspective and then from a practical perspective, they lose credibility.
CHAPTER 3

A BIBLICAL DEFENSE OF HUNTING AND FISHING

Are hunting and fishing addressed in Scripture? If so, how are they addressed? Does God speak of these with favor? How are hunting and fishing modeled in the Bible? Is it permissible for a believer to hunt and to fish, or does God forbid participation? What did he mean when he gave Adam and mankind the dominion of the plant and animal kingdoms? What other Biblical concerns may impact the subject of this study? What effect might they have on the utilization of these proposed means for the purposes suggested? Should a solution be sought to the problem presented? Or should the premise that hunting and fishing may be used for evangelism and discipleship be abandoned? If God does not approve of hunting and fishing the problem of whether they may be used for evangelism is solved with a resounding “No!”

The need for such a consideration is very evident in the modern culture where these pursuits are often demeaned as inhumane, cruel, useless and without any value in our modern times. These views are inaccurate, biased, and untrue, yet emotionally championed with deep fervor and at times with fanatical devotion. The common mistake is that society as a whole does not approve of hunting. Statistics tell us that this view is mistaken. The following comment shows the majority of people approve of hunting.

A scientific telephone survey conducted earlier this month shows that 78% of Americans support hunting, up from 73% in 1995. “This is the first nationwide study where we could verify that public support (for hunting) has increased over the past decade,” says Mark Damian Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, the research company that did the survey.”

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The answers to the above questions impact the overall relevance and importance of this study. For these reasons, this chapter is of highest importance. The considerations and conclusions of this chapter will have a direct bearing on the results, conclusions and recommendations that flow from this study. The answers influence whether or not the pursuit of hunting and fishing may be used for discipleship and evangelism. Questions which focus on the taking of animals for sport will be addressed from a theological perspective in this chapter, and more pragmatic issues will be addressed in chapter four.

**God Allows Hunting and Fishing**

The beginning premise is that God does address these subjects in the Holy Scriptures and that he approves of them. Hunting and fishing are acceptable in his eyes. Since this premise is true, the activities of hunting and fishing may be utilized for his purposes of evangelism and discipleship with the expectation that he would prosper them.

A beginning place to consider this principle is that God gave humans authority over the earth and the entirety of creation. This includes the animal kingdom.

“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; and fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’” Genesis 1:28 NIV

Hunting and fishing would be included in the subduing of nature and in ruling over it. Certainly this task would have been easier before the Fall, the ruling of nature in a fallen world would be very difficult without the ability to take them, kill them, or to use them for food as God later approves.

Having stated the above, a qualifying thought is appropriate. As hunting and fishing are addressed generally in this section, it does not establish a blanket approval of all methods of hunting and fishing. Certainly God delegates to civil government the
authority to speak for him in many matters. This includes the legislation of game laws, and the regulations that apply them. The believer is bound to obey these laws in order to live in good conscience, but some who take game do so for motives that are less than honorable, and some break the law. Dishonorable and unlawful actions and attitudes are condemned and are outside the limits of lawful pursuit of animals by hunting or fishing. This is especially true for the believer.

Evangelical Christians and most others who claim the title “Christian” accept the Bible as the final authority for faith and the practical application of that faith to life. The primary focus of this chapter is to consider and then to substantiate the legitimacy of hunting and fishing as allowable avocational activities from the Bible’s viewpoint.

Jesus would hardly have aided his disciples by enabling the great catch mentioned in Lk 5:1-8 if he did not condone the taking of fish. Nor would he have again enabled such an extraordinary harvest of fish as is mentioned in Jn 21:1-14. He personally prepared the fish and some bread for the nourishment of his apostles in the same account, encouraging them to bring some of the fish they had just taken to add to that which he was cooking already. As he urged this activity, enabled it, and personally participated, he places his stamp of approval on the harvesting and the consumption of fish.

Historical records such as those found in 1 Kings 4 describe the daily provisions needed to feed King Solomon’s court. Wild animals are included in the count needed for each day’s provisions. So, lawful, responsible fishing and the taking of game are authorized by the Creator. It is clear that he intended to allow people this practice and pursuit, making hunting and fishing privileges established by God. The lawful regulation
of these privileges is given to those who have authority in civil matters. This right is delegated by God to governments.

The succeeding examination will focus on passages where God addresses hunting and fishing in the Bible. What he says will be studied and set forth. The application of some practical lessons will follow. If the examination of Bible passages should lead to different conclusions than supposed, those conclusions will be declared and then the Biblical position will be adopted with the appropriate impact on the final application and practices relating to the premise of this study.

The Bible is accepted by most in Christianity as the Word of God. The Bible is judged as accurate and authoritative in all matters which it addresses. In it God reveals the practical standards for living life day to day. The standards set forth in the Bible are to be followed and obeyed because the Bible is the revelation of God’s will for the human race. The above paradigm is held by the author and will be applied to the problem as addressed in this project.

Christians then, seek to be consistent with the will of God by practically applying the Bible to all facets of life. This would certainly include one’s vocational and personal life in addition to one’s hobbies and avocations. If the Bible deems these pursuits as legitimate and allowed by God, then they will be legitimately usable for purposes of ministry including evangelism and discipleship.

**Answering “Thou Shalt Not Kill”**

This objection is quickly answered by a look at the Hebrew word which was translated from the original language. The Hebrew word and its context under
consideration is translated in the King James Version as “Thou shalt not kill.” Ex 20:13

Respected Hebrew authorities on this word give us insight to its meaning as follows,

The initial use of the root appears in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:13). In that important text it appears in the simple Qal stem with the negative adverb, ‘You shall not murder,’ being a more precise reading than the too-general KJV ‘thou shalt not kill.’ …This makes clear that rasah applies equally to both cases of premeditated murder and killings as a result of any other circumstances, what English Common Law has called, ‘manslaughter.’ The root also describes killing for revenge…and assassination….In only one case in the whole OT is the root used of the killing of a man by an animal… But even in that contest it is the enormity and horror of the deed which is primary. In all other cases of the use of rasah, it is man’s crime against man and Gods censure of it which is uppermost.\(^\text{12}\)

So there is a quick and decisive answer to the assertion that this commandment forbids the taking of all life, including that of animals. This word should more accurately have been translated as “murder” as later translations reflect. The commandment forbids the killing of another human without justification. God does allow for justifiably taking the life of another human. Examples of justifiable homicide are set forth in other portions of the Old Testament, and are confirmed by the New Testament.

Homicide is justifiable in the Scriptures for the following reasons: self-defense, defending property and persons under one’s care, battle. Civil governments are instructed to take the life of the criminal that is found guilty after due process, and are in fact, charged as follows, “Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image.” Gn 9:6 NLT This is a command from God to society to take the life of the murderer. The conclusion is that one that is presumptuous enough to murder is forfeiting their own right to live. In essence,

\(^\text{12}\text{R. Laird Harris, and Gleason L. Archer Jr. editor, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 860.}\)
they take their own life when they take the life of another human being without Biblical justification.

Dr. Tom C. Rakow, President of the Christian Deer Hunters Association shares his conclusions on this vital subject. His articulate Biblical critique of hunting arguments which are often misused by hunters is a valuable asset to any person seeking more in-depth study on this and related subjects. His defense of the sport is well done, and the following comment gives this issue more clarity.

Therefore, to try to twist the standard usage of this term in order to make it fit with an unorthodox application of sacred Scripture—and at the same time to be doing so in direct violation of both the immediate and wider context of the passage—is dishonest. Redefining the Hebrew term translated “kill” or “murder” so that individuals are led to believe that the term applies to animals or birds most certainly requires a radical redefinition of the Hebrew term itself.13

This objection to hunting and fishing is closely tied to the objection which is the subject of the following section. If “animals are people” then certainly murdering them would be forbidden by this commandment. Let’s examine the legitimacy of this claim in light of the Scriptures.

Answering Radar O’Reilly’s Objection

Are animals people? Do they have the same rights as human beings? Do animals have rights? If so, what rights do animals have? What authority guarantees those rights? Who makes sure those rights are upheld? This objection is important, and deserves careful consideration.

The heart of this issue focuses upon creation. If evolution is accepted as factual, then the argument is far more viable. If there is no God, and thus no higher power above

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humans, then some credibility should be extended to this opinion. However, if creation is true, then God and his Word rule every other argument groundless. Since the purpose of this paper is to address specific applications of ministry utilizing the taking of game for sporting purposes as a means to reach people, then it logically follows that evolution is rejected. A Biblical world view is the starting point. Therefore, the acceptance of creation as factual is the initial premise.

Are Animals People?

This question is at the heart of most of the arguments against hunting and fishing. It is of primary importance that an answer be found. It impacts not only this objection but that examined in the previous section where we considered “Thou shalt not kill.” Thankfully, the Bible gives clear answers and instruction.

First considered is that God has clearly distinguished humans from the animals he created. That primary distinguishing attribute is the “image of God.” “So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.” Gn 1:27 NLT No other created being is designated in this manner. Clarity is furnished by the following quote.

Entire books have been written on the subject, but briefly, historical Christian theology has affirmed that mankind was made in the imago Dei (Latin for image of God) according to Genesis 1:26-27. As the crown of God’s creation humanity uniquely displays the image of God by his rational capacities, moral volition, relational distinctives, spiritual qualities, and dominion over nature. Humans reflect the splendor of their Maker, yet in finite expression. As image-bearers humans possess inherent dignity and moral worth and should be treated with respect regardless of race, sex, class, or beliefs. Man’s fall into sin severely tarnished this image. [sic]¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid.
Only human life is unique in the account of creation as having been honored and distinguished by being created in the image and likeness of God. Although the depth of the meaning of this unique trait is not fully understood by the created, it clearly divides between human and non human. This distinct barrier is the point of demarcation and separates humans from animals completely and finally.

The diverse roles of human versus animal are clarified further. God created humans to worship him and to enjoy a personal love relationship with him. In the Old Testament, God prescribed animal sacrifice as a predictive symbol or type of the advent of Jesus Christ. God never commands the sacrifice of a human for sacrificial purposes. In fact he decries and detests it. Israel drifted from their God into the worship of idols where human sacrifice was required. The worship of Molech utilized the sacrifice of infants and children. God strongly shows his abhorrence of this practice in Jeremiah.

God’s statement in condemning this practice is to strong that it cannot be missed.

They have built pagan shrines to Baal in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and there they sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech. I have never commanded such a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command such a thing. What an incredible evil, causing Judah to sin so greatly! Jer 32:35 NLT

This passage which condemns finally and ultimately human sacrifice further differentiates humans from animals when compared to other passages where God approves and states his pleasure in receiving acceptable animal sacrifices. This was a practice honored and obeyed in Israel, and will be practiced again in the future as God’s plan unfolds. The Scriptures inform us of God’s pleasure in animal sacrifices offered in love and obedience.

and you want to please the Lord with a burnt offering or any other offering given by fire, the sacrifice must be an animal from your flocks of sheep and goats or from your herds of cattle. When it is an ordinary burnt offering, a sacrifice to fulfill a
vow, a freewill offering, or a special sacrifice at any of the annual festivals … Nm 15:3 NLT

Humans reflect their Creator in important ways. Yet the created is not equal in quantity or quality with the Creator regarding these reflective attributes. They mirror the Creator, yet fall far short of measuring up to his infinite nature. One reason this image is incomplete and marred is because humans chose to sin, and as a race became sinners. “When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.” Rom 5:12 NLT This verse summarizes the effects of the Genesis account of the sin of mankind. As a result, God’s image which was created in man was defaced and limited.

One example of God’s image in humans is in the ability to think and reason. Humans are able to comprehend, consider, and contemplate issues far surpassing that of animals. The quote on page 43 from Dr. Tom Rakow speaks well to this subject, verifying it. Animals can learn, be conditioned, be trained, and express other abilities or gain in training and learning. But the capacity for understanding complex issues, abstract concepts, and theories characterizes people as surpassingly unique.

An example of delineation between human capacity for thinking and that of animals is asserted in the book of Daniel. King Nebuchadnezzar is being taught about the sovereignty of God. To do this, God is going to bring a kind of insanity upon him for a period of seven years. Yet to show that God is in control, the kingdom will be preserved for him, and returned to him when the time of insanity is ended. He describes this period of insanity as a time where King Nebuchadnezzar will think like an animal, and not a human. This is a clear degradation of status in functional reality.
He was driven from human society. He was given the mind of an animal, and he lived among the wild donkeys. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he learned that the Most High God rules the kingdoms of the world and appoints anyone he desires to rule over them. Dn 5:21 NLT

Another example of this segregation is in reaction to death. Humans worry and fret, tend to deny, put off, and avoid dealing with issues that involve death and dying. An interesting yet ironic illustration of denying death is that what is called life insurance is not collected until the death of the one insured. Yet animals seem unworried and unaware of approaching death. This is totally different from the experience of people.

A personal observation of a dog that was confronted by the death of her pen mate revealed no sense of loss, no grief, and no emotional reaction. A mother dog confronted with her dead pup showed no cognition of loss, no remorse, and no grief. The mother casually sniffed the corpse and was on her way. Human parents who lose children react entirely differently with great distress and grief. These personal observations were clear indications of the vast divide between animal and human.

People often show great fear when facing their own death. Humans often wail, cry, sob, grieve deeply, and agonize at the death of a friend or a loved one. A diagnosis of terminal disease or medical condition can send a person into deep depression. This is because of the sense of eternity written in their hearts by God. This is a reflection of his image, and this is why people deeply react to their own approaching deaths or the loss of a loved one. “As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die?” Ez 33:11 NLT

How great the vast gulf between animals and homo sapiens!
Eternal is defined as that which lived infinitely in the past, exists now, and will exist perpetually in the future. Immortal refers to that which has a finite beginning and continues on through eternity future. God is eternal. Man reflects this attribute having been created by God and endowed with immortality. All humans will live somewhere forever.

The Bible clearly states that a part of mankind’s being will live forever. There are a variety of views, arguments, debates and positions on this subject. It is not in the current purview to consider the finer points of distinction in theology and the different views which are held on the matter of immortality. The point which impacts this study is whether the Bible addresses and teaches that there is a part of man that continues on after death. Indeed, the Bible teaches that eternal life is a fact, and is furnished in God’s Son.

Jesus’ own words confirm the fact of immortality as He says, "Don't be afraid of those who want to kill you. They can only kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Mt 10:28 NLT Jesus clearly affirms the existence of humans beyond physical life. The distinction Christ makes refers to a soul that lives on, but that can be judged by eternity in hell.

From other passages, Jesus instructs us that the destruction of the soul is not annihilation, but rather an eternity of separation from God. This separation from God forever is reserved for those who will not believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior. Unbelievers are first reserved in Hell until Judgment. Later, after the Great White Throne Judgment, the Lake of Fire is the destination of those unconverted for the balance of eternity.
The distinction of human life is shown as the spiritual part of man is clearly established as follows, “For then the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.” Eccl 12:7 NLT Human terminology faces challenges differentiating between the words soul and spirit from the original languages of the Scriptures. This challenge is reflected in the following.

A common Hebrew word translated life (soul) is nephesh. Nephesh is used for the life or breath of both animals and man (Gen. 1:20, 30; 19: 17). Life is that state that is opposite of death. It is a state of animation, breathing, and awareness. Men and animals alike possess a soul in the sense of breath nephesh. However, in the sense of possessing a part or element that lives forever, as man possesses, animals do not possess an eternal spirit (cp. Matt. 25:46). The animal simply and totally returns to the dust, the spirit of man continues to exist (Eccl. 3:21, p. 12: 7).15

Many other applications, observations and defenses could be addressed. Thus far, research of Biblical evidence concludes that animals and humans, though seemingly sharing some common traits, are separated by a vast canyon of differences that clearly sets them apart with finality. Animals were never intended by the Creator to be considered equal with humans. The greatest distinction being in the fact that man is immortal having been created in the image of God. This immortal essence is completely missing in animals. Further, mankind alone is the image bearer of God, making man totally unique from all animal life. The conclusion must be that animals ARE NOT people.

The Scriptures clarify the value of people in Jesus’ own words. He speaks for the Father noting, “Look at the birds. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than

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they are.” Mt 6:26 NLT Animals are valuable to God, and to Jesus. But humans are vastly more so. Christ’s own words and teachings confirm this. The ultimate value of human life is shown in God’s willing action to give the life of his own Son for the redemption of the humans he created. “He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven.” Eph 1:7 NLT

When addressing this subject, people often choose a position based upon a personal experience. Many times this occasion is the loss of a cherished pet. The logical reaction is that one wants the pet to be in heaven with them. Sentiment is understandable, and human. However, the view one assumes on this issue affects directly the issue of animal rights as well as humans and their rights.

Do Animals Have Rights?

The answer to this statement is “yes” and “no!” The “yes” answer is that animals have some rights that are authorized and commanded by God. The “no” answer is that these rights are not inherent to the animal, are limited in their scope, and do not apply totally to every situation.

It is clear from Scripture that God made the animals for the pleasure and use of humanity and did not create them as equals. Humans are allowed and encouraged to use the animals by the fact that God gave humans the mastery. “Then God said, ‘Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life---the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals.’” Gn 1:26 NLT

Later in the account of creation, God designates the plants and their produce for food for man and for animals. After the Great Flood, God approved the animals as food
to humans. “All the wild animals, large and small, and all the birds and fish will be afraid of you. I have placed them in your power. I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables.” Gn 9:2-3

The animals were distinguished clean and unclean by God. The clean were allowed for consumption, and some of them further designated as approved for sacrificial purposes. God states that man is to have the mastery over the animals, birds, and fish. “God blessed them and told them, ‘Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals.’” Gn 1:29 NLT

God Himself is recorded as directly responsible for the first animal deaths recorded in the Biblical historical narrative. The purpose of these deaths was for the benefit of mankind. Their deaths provided skins which were for a covering for the nakedness of the first couple. The nakedness of Adam and Eve was a symbol of humanities’ guilt before their Creator. We are told “And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.” Gn 3:21 NLT It is sensible to assume that since the skins were furnished, God took the lives of the animals to provide their skins as a covering for the sin of Adam and Eve.

This is the first mention in the Bible of animals having their lives taken. The principle of first mention in Bible interpretation establishes a higher emphasis upon a truth when it is addressed for the first time. So this incident is of particular importance. The deaths of these animals directly benefited human beings. God took the lives of these animals. These animal deaths ended in a temporary covering for the sin of humans. This clearly establishes the use of animals for sacrificial purposes, and for the general benefit of mankind. God’s personal action in this matter establishes a precedent for sacrifices
which is later commanded. God gave clear and specific commands for animal sacrifice. They were to make mankind aware of the awful nature of our sin. All these sacrifices were types which pointed to Christ who is the fulfillment or anti-type of these sacrifices.

In beautiful prediction of his future work, Jesus is figuratively described as the Lamb of God. John the Baptist calls the attention of his own student disciples to Christ saying, “Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Jn 1:29 NLT Many believe this was an act full of symbolism to show the need for a substitute for the payment for sin. Jesus would later fulfill this prediction.

The use of animals for food, provision of covering for sin by sacrifice, and the fact that God personally caused the deaths of sacrificial animals as a covering for the sin of mankind show God’s intent. The plan from creation, even before the fall of humanity into sin, was for men and women to utilize, manage, and conserve what God created and delegated to them, including the animals. Animals are for the use and benefit of people, and from the beginning it was so ordered.

God prescribes specific rights for the animals when he gives specific guidelines for their proper use and the conservation of animals. It is important to the topic that responsibility for the care and utilization of animals, birds, and fish is clearly commanded in the Holy Scriptures. We call this stewardship of the earth, conservation.

An example of small detail given to the care and conservation of wild animals is in the following instruction. “If you find a bird’s nest on the ground or in a tree and there are young ones or eggs in it with the mother sitting in the nest, do not take the mother with the young. You may take the young, but let the mother go, so you may prosper and enjoy a long life.” Dt 22:6-7 NLT While God’s reasons are not given, could it be so that
the mother is alive and free to re-nest and reproduce? This same principle constitutes the reason that hunters are not allowed to harvest the hens while hunting wild pheasants.

Standards are clearly given for proper care of beasts of burden, including a day of rest. A reward is guaranteed for the working animal when God says, "Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain." Dt 25:4 NLT These are clear commandments which declare that God values animals and that he commands humans to care for them properly and to treat them humanely. Thus, God establishes some animal rights.

The Bible instructs the hunter to consume what is taken during the hunt. Many hunters wish there was some way to utilize the “catch and release” principle which is working so well in the conservation of vital fisheries and ecosystem management. Unfortunately, there is no way to remove the shot from a downed bird in order to release it unharmed to the wild again. But God’s Word is a moral and ethical compass that challenges us to good stewardship. Hunters must avoid wanton and unjustifiable taking of animals. What is taken in fair chase must be utilized as completely as possible. Waste of these precious resources only allows the anti hunters subject matter for their propaganda. God will hold us individually responsible for our treatment of animals.

God has clearly set forth the rules and restrictions governing the enjoyment and the use of animals. The rules governing the slaughter of animals for food and for sacrifice demanded a quick kill that would drain the blood from the animal quickly and as painlessly as it could be done. Mistreatment of animals was strictly prohibited, and punishment proscribed to those who violated. Death is a direct result of the fall of the human race into sin. Sadly this became necessary for the animals as well.
God provides for the animals and sometimes for people in the ancient laws of harvest in the Promised Land. He orders the trees to be only once picked by the harvesters. He commands that the corners of the fields be left for the poor. One would imagine that some would be left for animals and birds to consume as well. The Lord also refers to the care of God for the animals. He reminds us, “Look at the birds. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because your heavenly Father feeds them....” Mt 6:26 NLT Further, we are reminded of providential provision by witnessing animal instincts to create nests and to find suitable dens for shelter. “But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no home of my own, not even a place to lay my head.” Lk 9:58 NLT

Providential design has equipped animals with a vast array of abilities to protect themselves and their young. “…You care for people and animals alike, O Lord.” Ps 36:6 NLT Instincts are mentioned as a further demonstration of the difference between mankind and animals. “But these people mock and curse the things they do not understand. Like animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and they bring about their own destruction.” Jude 1:10 NLT Humans who mock God and right are mentioned as having given themselves over to animal like instincts.

Observation has been made of hen pheasants that pretended to be wounded, yet were able to fly just enough to continue to evade a predator. When the predator was lured a safe distance from the young, the mother flew away unscathed. Her young was thus protected by this built in tactic which the Creator bestowed. This appears to be something passed on by genetics rather than by a learned behavior. In many similar ways, God cares for the animals.
A summary of animal rights that are expected or commanded by God would include humane treatment. When the death of the animal is required, this would include as fast a death as possible, and with as little pain as possible. Humans that keep animals and utilize animals for personal pleasure or financial gain would be expected to provide reasonable shelter, proper food, or provision to forage for it, and appropriate veterinary care. This specialized care could include regular worming, immunizations, care when ill, and other specific procedures when recommended. With today’s over-population of many domesticated animals, neutering them should be a consideration to animal owners.

Conclusion

Animals do have some rights in the sense that God has given commandment as to their use and treatment. God will hold all people responsible for the animals in their care. It is part of the original commandment given of God in the Creation Account of Genesis to subdue the earth. This mastery is clarified and conditioned in the Pentateuch. It is far better for the animals to enjoy the protection and validation of their value by God himself than an arbitrary and ambiguous standard erected and championed by mere individuals and organizations.

The sad reality is that all of creation has suffered greatly and does suffer because of humans. We chose to sin, and death and suffering passed upon all creatures. However, there is coming in God’s economy a time when creation and mankind will be released from the grip of death, suffering, pain, and its associations.

All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Rom 8:21-22 NLT
**Answering “Hunting Causes the Unnecessary Suffering of Animals”**

Few outdoors people who pursue game for recreational purposes enjoy and look forward to the actual killing of the animal. Nor do they revel in seeing a handsome animal lying dead at the end of the hunt or the end of a day’s fishing. The legitimate sports person experiences a true sense of grief and of responsibility after the harvest of an animal. Death and dying are a part of our fallen world. Pain and suffering came with the fall of man. So in essence, in a Bible based world view, ALL death, pain, suffering is because of the entire race and its choices. So, all people are responsible for pain and suffering!

God clearly states the responsibility of man for sin in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. He makes it clear that sins’ effects would radiate to every part and parcel of creation. Only at the ultimate redemption of man and the triumph of God’s future plan would death, suffering, pain, and all their miseries be conquered once and for all. We understand from the Bible account that Satan entered into the serpent and was the agent of temptation. But all humans took the bait in Adam and Eve. The lasting effect until God’s plan is finally accomplished is set forth clearly and finally in the following passage.

[14] So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly.

[15] From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

[16] Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, he will be your master.”
[17] And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

[18] It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

[19] All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return." Gn 3:14-19 NLT

A list of the words that God chooses to describe life from these verses is revealing. They include punishment, pain, suffering, toil, curse, groveling, struggle, dying, sweat, thorns and thistles, and a return to the dust from which man was made. It could hardly be clearer that suffering came because of sin, and the choice of all humans in Adam and Eve to join in.

It is also clear that all creation will agonize and endure the same fate. This hardly seems fair, but in a sin prevalent world, fair is not an achievable target and is not subject to definition by the created. Only the Creator has the right to determine what is just and right.

Like it or not, we live in a world which has experienced death ever since the Garden of Eden---and will continue to experience it until Christ returns. We are constantly being confronted with varying degrees of death, disease, and decay all around us. Although for some it may be a hard truth to swallow, nature can be, and presently is, incredibly brutal. The world in which we and all wildlife are immersed is not what it once was. Ever since the events recorded in Genesis chapter three, our world has been radically altered. And although some may make every human effort to put nature back in its ’pre-fall’ track, this transformation will ultimately require God’s sovereign intervention.16

When examining the remains of an animal that has been dragged down by coyotes, wolves, or other predators, the observer is reminded that the wild is not the utopia many would have the public believe. Cattle in the midst of a difficult birth have

16Dr Tom C. Rakow, Self-Inflicted Hunting Arguments: Biblical Responses to a Loaded Issue (Silver Lake, MN 55381: Rock Dove Publications, 2003), 86.
been literally eaten while still alive by coyotes and other predatory animals. This is a common occurrence in cattle country. An animal that is killed by predatory animals often suffers a far more painful death than the death caused by the ethical hunter. So, humans are not alone in killing or causing suffering to animals.

Many films, books, and stories furnished to children attribute human-like intellect, emotion, and feelings to animals. This practice is totally misleading and inaccurate. It adds to the misunderstanding of the true status of animals. In fact it may lead to a child thinking that a wild animal may be trusted when it cannot, putting the child in harms way or attack of death from a wild creature.

What is necessary pain and suffering? Often this seems to be in the eye of the beholder, completely personal and subjective in nature. This matter is not often defined with concrete boundaries and guidelines. Preferences and opinions are fine, but the animal rights crowd goes far beyond the boundaries of personal choices and freedoms and purposes to impose their own preferences on all others. They leave little room for peaceful coexistence, and though they often tout tolerance as a byline, this is not borne out in their attitudes and actions.

A third question is “Would the cessation of hunting and fishing stop the pain and suffering of animals?” The answer is definitely no! Many animal rights proponents accept some wide presumption in taking the view that animal suffering would stop if hunting were discontinued. Practical observation reveals that where man and hunting serve as the only viable means of population control, animals are often subject to over-population which promotes disease and increases the frequency of genetic abnormalities.
which cause suffering. It is amazing that anti hunters actually believe that animal pain and suffering would cease if hunting and fishing were discontinued!

Others want to ban all animal products including those that do not necessitate the death of the animal. Their list seems extreme, past common sense, and certainly outside the general parameters of society. A partial list of examples includes drinking milk, eating eggs, using wool sheared from sheep, and using animals for work. There are some tasks for which animals seem especially designed in serving mankind. These would also be forbidden by the animal rights adherent. Specific examples are using guide dogs for the blind, guard dogs for the protection of property and persons, and specially trained search and rescue animals for finding lost children and adults. According to some of these groups, all work done by animals would be dropped because they believe it is abuse of these animals to expect them to accomplish work.

Do animal rights activists forego the personal use of automobiles because unnecessary pain and suffering to animals occurs from animal crashes with cars? One misses the objections from these activists to driving vehicles for this reason. Have there ever been demonstrations against the major automobile manufacturers to cease and desist from the production of motor vehicles for this reason? How many of these activists forgo personal driving and choose instead to walk everywhere in order to accomplish this goal? It might be suggested by some of the activists that essential travel would be allowed.

Other questions jump to the fore as this suggestion is considered. How would one decide what is essential travel and that which is non-essential? Is it all right for animals to be caused pain and suffering for essential travel? Who would decide what travel is essential? Possibly the animal rights activists assume they have this moral high ground?
Though some travel is essential to living, much travel in this country is not a matter of life and death. Optional travel for pleasure, for entertainment, for recreational purposes, and for other optional activities consumes a large portion of the normal commuting. Many today have the option of car pooling for rides, but elect to drive their own vehicles. Few other optional activities contribute to the pain and suffering of animals as much as the use of motorized transportation.

Considering this issue of banning motor transportation seems logical if unnecessary pain and suffering are to be eliminated at all costs! Banning driving would be a means to the same end. Yet this argument is not often suggested or championed due to the love of the automobile around the world. This point reveals a major inconsistency to the animal rights position as it applies to the argument currently under consideration.

How much pain and suffering is caused by motor vehicles? A trip on most interstate highways in the fall of the year will reveal the answer. The carnage is easily viewed by all drivers. Deer carcasses appear over and over again as the drive is made. For every animal that is immediately killed, how many others are wounded to suffer elongated, painful deaths after what at first seems to be an escape? Many times blood stains are witnessed on the roadways, yet there is no animal visible. The numbers of animals wounded that get away to eventually die a painful, miserable, and often extended death would seem to be staggering.

According to the Insurance Information Institute (III), there are more than 1.5 million automobile crashes involving deer each year in the U.S., resulting in an estimated $1.1 billion vehicle damage and all too often, injury to the driver or passengers as well.  

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What about the people that are injured in such cases? The above quote brings into play the suffering of people caused by auto crashes with animals. Is this pain and suffering caused to humans by these accidents considered unnecessary? Most would consider such injuries unfortunate. Would not most people think that suffering and damages inflicted upon humans would be a greater tragedy than to that of animals?

Further, all animals will die at some point. That is the sad fact in a sin ravaged world suffering from the effects of its own choices. Nature is a violent place. Death by predation is an ugly and violent event many times involving immense suffering.

Friends of the author heard and witnessed this fact first hand in the capture and killing of a hen turkey during the spring season while hunting in Iowa. They were set up in a good location. Early on there was significant gobbling from roosting tom turkeys. Mixed in among the gobbles were the sounds of hens on the roost. At fly down, two hens answered the calls and approached the hunters remaining just out of sight over a slight rise of ground. Something flashed by the hunters; and within a split second, one of the hens took instantaneous flight! The other was captured by a coyote! The ferocious nature of the kill, and the helpless distress purrs of the captured hen were permanently engraved upon the minds of these friends! The savagery, brutality, snarling, and violence, emphasized by the crunching bones of the prey were not a publication of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect which is so often pictured in programming and children’s stories. The kill showed no mercy, no quickness! In fact, they were not sure that the hen was even dead as the coyote made its way toward its den with the head of the hen in its mouth, and the body dangling and being dragged along on the way.
Since all animals will die, and will suffer some pain during this event, there is no way it may ultimately be avoided. This is a clearly established fact, yet one often glossed over or relegated to last page coverage by animal rightists. The Scriptures clearly mandate the most humane methods of killing of animals when slaughter is necessary. Hunters and fishermen are bound by this same rule. As quick and as painless a death as possible for their quarry is the goal of the vast majority of hunters and anglers.

“While it is certainly important that humans manage the non-human members of creation with great care—we must also realize that all creatures (unless Christ returns first) will eventually die. Simply pronouncing a death sentence upon hunting will not do away with death in the animal kingdom. On the contrary, to stop hunting will no doubt result in something far more wasteful and, at times, intensely brutal.”18

To just put an end to the practices of hunting and fishing would not end animal suffering. Animals are not people. God created them for the use and even the pleasure of people. Killing animals is not murder. Animals will suffer whether anglers and hunters pursue their avocations or not. All animals will die eventually. This is true in our world because of the fall of humans. The death that comes from nature and natural causes is often far more painful than death animals experience from ethical hunting and fishing.

God has authorized standards for the well being of animals, but he has not forbidden using them as food, work, enjoyment, or for other purposes, even when the death of the animal is necessary. All of the animal kingdom awaits with expectation the culmination of God’s redemptive plan when they too will experience the glorious freedom from the curse of sin.

It is the conclusion of this research that God allows humans to hunt. He has created a vast distinction between all humans and animals. God has given humans the

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duty of conservation and management of animals. They may legitimately be used for food, clothing, sacrifice, and for labor. Animals are to be treated as a stewardship of God and are not to be treated with cruelty or neglect. God gives them some rights and requires these rights be upheld by humanity. God will hold humans accountable for the way they utilize, manage, and conserve the animals he has placed under their subjection.
CHAPTER 4

A PRACTICAL DEFENSE OF HUNTING AND FISHING

The previous chapter dealt with some objections to hunting and fishing from a theological perspective. Issues involving hunting from a practical or pragmatic approach will be the focus of this chapter. Some of the objections addressed apply more to hunting than to fishing.

Evidence presented in this chapter will establish the credibility of hunting, including sport hunting, because of practical issues. There are a number of very practical reasons which necessitates the continuance of hunting. Some of these reasons will naturally follow as the objections are considered. Others will be addressed separately and will stand alone.

Answering “Hunting is Unnecessary Today”

As noted earlier, the argument goes something like this. “In the early history of this country, wild animals were needed by Native Americans, and by pioneers for their very existence. Today we have abundant supplies of food without hunting, so hunting is not needed.” Some allow that Native Americans should be allowed to hunt and to fish. They hold these activities to be inherent to that culture and that hunting and fishing should be continued as a right to Native Americans. Some argue that hunting privileges should be discontinued for all others, since they are not needed today and are not inherent to modern culture.

First to be addressed, what is necessary in today’s world? Who determines what is necessary and unnecessary? An individual? A privileged group? Public opinion? What are the rights of the individual? What are the rights of society or culture as a
whole? The view which concludes that hunting is unnecessary is speculative and extremely personal in nature. Often these people mean well, and assume that the culture of their own family or circle of influence is automatically correct. When it comes to hunting emotions quickly arise, both for those in favor of hunting and for those against it.

Our country is supposed to be a pluralistic society. An older understanding of this word states that pluralism is when a variety of differing groups or individuals exist together bringing their diverse viewpoints and values for consideration. Then a common ground is found, and this common ground is normally better for all concerned than the views of each group or person. When working correctly, pluralism constructs a stronger whole from the divergent parts. This stronger result is because of the supporting and diversified members. This is how our country is supposed to work.

We have the right to our own preferences, opinions, and ideas. We do not have the right to force them upon others, nor to infringe upon the rights of others. Of course society reserves the right to determine what is legal and illegal to protect that whole. Animal rights activists are within their rights to espouse and champion their opinions. They are outside the boundaries of their rights when they seek to enforce their own mores upon all others. The laws of this land are to protect the rights of all. Law is not supposed to protect the preferences and opinions of all groups, but to enable those groups to hold to their values, standards, and preferences as long as they are not contrary to law.

Is Hunting a Right

An appeal is made first to the earlier section which clearly establishes that God allows hunting and fishing. We may not say strictly that hunting and fishing are rights.
But if God allows these practices, careful respect should be given these privileges. All who condemn them disapprove what God approves. This is always dangerous.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America guarantees the individual the right to own and bear arms. While some contest the rights by interpretation, most jurisprudent rulings establish that firearms ownership is an individual right for the average American. It does not establish the right to hunt per se. But it would be very difficult to hunt without the use of firearms. Bow hunting would certainly enjoy a large leap in participation if this right were somehow lost! The following conclusion regarding Second Amendment rights is appropriate.

Hunters have also been guilty of trying to hide behind the Second Amendment. Hunters have also been guilty of supporting the Second Amendment for their own self-centered reasons. Sadly, for these the Second Amendment is a security blanket that exists for the protection of certain hunting privileges rather than for the “security of a free state.” As a result, we have some hunters who proudly claim, “Hunting is my right as an American!” Those who rely upon this argument do so by directly tying the issue of hunting to the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Now there are no doubt important ramifications which deleting or distorting this part of the U.S. Constitution would have upon hunting. Nevertheless, it seems obvious to me that the Second Amendment is really not directly addressing the issue of hunting. In fact, when the Second Amendment was penned, the liberty to hunt was an accepted way of life as well as an important part of contemporary culture.19

It is important to note that a number of states have passed specific legislation that intends to guarantee the continuing rights of hunters. These laws were in response to direct attempts by many to ban the ownership of firearms using lawsuits aimed at the manufacturers of firearms. These lawsuits contended that the ones who manufactured,

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distributed, and retailed the firearms were directly liable for the use or misuse of these weapons. Fortunately, these lawsuits were ultimately defeated, and as a result, some states have enacted laws to prevent such attempts to end firearm ownership and ultimately hunting.

“A dozen states across the country have recently passed constitutional amendments protecting the right to hunt and fish. Others are in the process of doing so.

…In 2000. Virginia voters approved a constitutional amendment: “The people have a right to hunt, fish and harvest game,” subject to regulation by the state legislature, according to the Virginia Constitution.20

If those who oppose firearm ownership win, the question of whether hunting is unnecessary is made mute. To hunt without a firearm would be very difficult. Hunters may expect on going and ingenious attempts to strip the rights to own firearms and to hunt. That is why efforts must be increased to protect and promote both rights.

The answer to the current question is that hunting is at least a privilege. The Maker allows that angling and hunting may be legitimately pursued. He has established that believers should obey the laws of the land in which they live, unless said law invokes something God expressly commands or forbids. Further, these opportunities have been approved and established by the law of the land. Control and management of hunting privileges have been delegated by God to governments, and by the national government to the individual states for management. Many states have enacted legislation that establishes hunting and fishing privileges as law.

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Is Hunting Necessary

The old wisdom of “Ask the wrong question and you will get the wrong answer,” comes to mind in this consideration. Asking if hunting is necessary is the wrong question. The question should be “Why would hunting be unnecessary?” If practical reasons exist where hunting provides a legitimate role, the argument is won. At least some hunting is then validated as necessary. Several legitimate reasons exist that justify hunting generally.

There are a number of circumstances where hunting is useful if not indispensable. These uses are practical in nature, and establish hunting as necessary today. The purposes of conservation, the control of dangerous animals, the control or eradication of destructive animals, and the providing of food to needy people will constitute divergent reasons to illustrate and to validate hunting, and many more could be brought forward. Some specific purposes are addressed in the following sections of this effort.

**Hunting is a Necessary Tool for Conservation**

Conservation purposes prioritize hunting as a necessary tool for proper wildlife resource management. Animals are indeed a trust given by the Almighty. Since they are a trust, these resources require conservation and management. Where controlling wild animal populations is paramount, hunting is a major tool in game management.

The over-abundance of Whitetail Deer is a vivid example of this need. Their numbers have increased phenomenally in most of the country. “Whitetail Deer Then –
500,000 Now – 18 Million! In 1900, an official US Survey estimated less than 500,000 Whitetail Deer remaining in the nation. Today, there are about 18 million.”

Though beautiful and graceful to observe, deer cause damage in many ways. They inflict major losses in agricultural crops in most parts of the United States. Suburbia suffers huge economic loss due to the destruction of ornamental plants and landscaping shrubberies. Car-deer crashes inflict major damage upon vehicles, and often drivers and passengers in these vehicles are severely injured or killed.

The over-population of deer and associated problems has birthed some rather amazing suggestions as solutions to the control of deer numbers. Incredible contortions are attempted in order to avoid hunting as an approved solution. The city of Solon, Ohio provides a classic example of these attempts to deal with the over-population of deer, yet avoid appearing to legitimize the practice of hunting. The following quotes will illustrate the foolishness and impracticality of that situation. (This article has been edited because of its length. Only portions are quoted below.)

In 2004, 175 deer were struck by vehicles in Solon. The animals’ habitat was shrinking as more developments were being built to accommodate new residents and industry. Simultaneously, the deer population continued to increase. Too many deer, too many people, not enough room. Luckily, no drivers were killed in the accidents. But if something didn’t change, there would eventually be fatalities.

As more humans moved into Solon and pushed the deer into smaller sections of forest, the deer consumed the remaining low-level plant life, driving away species of birds and woodland creatures that used the shrubs for protection. Nature’s balance had become upset.

Also, homeowners complained about deer eating their flowers and defecating on their lawns. In an affluent suburb, this is a big problem for local elected officials.

David Hromco, the assistant director of public works for Solon, spearheaded the drive to come up with some final solution. Shooting contraceptives into female deer seemed too costly and would take years to bring the population down. Nearby ’burb Pepper Pike favored the captive-bolt technique — capturing deer in nets, then driving metal rods through their brains — but many thought that was inhumane.

City council went with sharp-shooting instead.

Hromco arranged a bid package. The only company to apply was Anthony DeNicola’s nonprofit, White Buffalo Inc. At the time, DeNicola was training Cleveland Metroparks sharpshooters and came highly recommended. His resume was impressive. Godzich signed him after an interview.

“The two-year program cost the taxpayers about $500,000,” explains Hromco. For that kind of money, council hoped it had picked the right man for the job. In fact, they had hired the best. 22

Amazingly, no one contests the need to do something about the excessive deer population; only the method in which the animals are taken finds opposition. The city could easily have legislated the legal taking of deer by hunters, especially bow hunters. Archers would have paid money for the privilege of safely hunting these animals and solving the problem. Birth control for deer? Nets used to capture them and then they are collected for slaughter? What amazing and ludicrous suggestions! All because some object to hunting! Ironically, the chosen solution to the problem was contracted hunting! Albeit done only by selected individuals, and not by the public.

Nature clearly records the fact that over-population of animals soon fosters the propagation of disease, and these maladies may decimate entire local populations. Observation has noted rapid growth of Cottontail Rabbit populations. Soon after that, the red fox population expands and brings about a decline in the rabbit’s numbers. Often though, the foxes are not able to decrease as rapidly, and mange begins a rapid fire spread

through their population. Death by mange, a disease contracted from small blood sucking insects, is a slow and elongated death with much suffering. The decline in red fox numbers in such radical proportions causes their population to be very low for years to come. Mange can be transferred to domestic stock as well, thus providing another necessity for hunting over-populated wild animals before diseases spread.

**Hunting Helps Control Dangerous Animals**

The control of dangerous animals is a second important reason for hunting. The danger of humans being attacked by wild animals is real and often reported. This story gives vivid reminder of this truth.

For 25-year-old Becky Wanamaker, it was a fun “Alaskan-style” road trip that went quickly to the wolves. Following a week of camping, Wanamaker and four friends were headed along the Dalton Highway when they stopped at a roadside campground. The next morning, July 7, she got up early for a run.

“I came out onto the highway and, standing in the open, just twenty yards away, was a wolf,” she says. The two locked eyes and then, Wanamaker admits, she did something stupid.

“I just turned and ran,” she says. “I can’t remember if I saw it coming after me or if I just knew it was coming. But it sunk its teeth into my leg pretty deep and I stumbled.”

Wanamaker ran to a nearby outhouse for safety, but not before the wolf bit her again, this time on her other leg. Slamming the outhouse door behind her, she looked at her wounds an inch-long gash and three puncture wounds on her right leg and two puncture wounds on her left knee-then started screaming for help….

Wanamaker was taken to a hospital, where she underwent rabies shots as a precaution. 23

Sympathy for the victim of such an attack should be universal. The wolf in question could not be euthanized or captured for medical testing for rabies or other diseases. Perhaps Wanamaker’s decision to run triggered a reaction according to the

predatory nature and instincts of the wolf. But in most places, this animal would justifiably be killed in order to prevent further episodes of attacks on other people. Such situations qualify as a necessary use of hunting.

When the state of California made hunting mountain lions illegal several years ago, reports of mountain lion attacks increased. The animals lost their fear of humans since humans posed them no threat. Animal rights activists deny any association between the increase of lion attacks and the cessation of lion hunting. However, pro-hunting groups interpret the facts differently. They believe the facts support the legalization of the sport of mountain lion hunting in California.

Mountain lion attacks on people have increased dramatically since 1986. For example, in California, there were two fatal attacks in 1890 and 1909, and then no further attacks for 77 years, until 1986. From 1986 through 1995, ten verified attacks occurred, an average rate of one per year. That average rate has continued through 1999. Attacks are now numerous enough that there is a support group for attack victims, called California Lion Awareness (CLAW; Outside, 10/95). Since 1970 there has been an average of 14 cougar attacks per year on people in the entire U.S. 24

Attacks on humans by coyotes, cougars (also known as mountain lions), alligators, bears, bob cats and lynx clearly are on the increase, and the growth in the number of these attacks coincides with the increase of the populations of these animals when legal hunting and trapping are disallowed. As seen earlier, the over-population of animals also often results in the spread of diseases which are communicable to livestock and often humans.

**Hunting Removes Destructive Animals**

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Whitetail Deer are a visible example of the need for conservation and management. Their numbers have increased phenomenally in most of this country, and as a result, many are struck by motor vehicles, endangering the occupants and causing major damage to the vehicle which results in higher insurance and other costs. Deer inflict major damage to crops in most parts of the United States, and ornamental plants and landscaping shrubberies are often completely ruined at great economic loss.

Attempts to control deer populations range from the unpractical to the ridiculous. Reports of attempts to use contraceptives, live trapping and relocation, and even the use of specially trained and qualified snipers are on the records. The above are offered and accomplished at great expense to tax payers, and most often have no lasting results.

The methods used above are many times attempted to mollify those who object to hunting. Ironically, many hunters would pay additional fees, take necessary classes, and do whatever is necessary to harvest these animals. This conservation effort could be a money maker for state and local governments, rather than be an ongoing source of expense.

Some animals are dangerous and need to be removed because of the destruction they cause to the habitat, to other animals, to crops and agricultural lands. A sobering reminder of this is the increase in population and range of feral hogs. These wild pigs are presenting major challenges to the eco system in major parts of the nation.

Feral hogs are making an all out assault upon new areas of our country. They were once considered to be native to the Southern United States, and hog hunting was a source of entertainment. The ability of feral hogs to reproduce rapidly, and the spread of
their range to many new areas of the country is alarming. Hunting is one of the few sources of control for these animals.

The subhead reads “Ecological disaster looming! Predator hunters to the rescue!”25 This article documents clearly the danger inherent in uncontrolled herds of feral hogs. The first few paragraphs of this article shock us into the reality of the threat.

Now is the time for predator hunters to come to the aid of their country by hunting, shooting and eating wild hogs. Here’s why: According to the wildlife professionals, feral hogs are on a path to become the No. 1 wildlife problem in America. The scientific community report the fastest-growing populations of feral hogs have moved into the Bread Basket of America − the Midwest. So, it’s time to move over coyotes and coyote hunters, and make room for the pigs.

Wild hogs destroy croplands and wetlands, kill and eat domestic live-stock, compete with native wildlife (including coyotes) for food, monopolize acorn and soft-mast crops and eat turtles, reptiles, and amphibians, including some endangered toads and lizards. They’re also threatening entire ecosystems. In Hawaii, where fresh water is a precious commodity, feral hogs alter water flow and nutrient cycling to disrupt the quality of the water, costing Hawaii billions of dollars each year.26

How can this threat be controlled? The same article gives us a recommendation. It informs us that hunting is an essential element to this multiplying danger. It establishes hunting as necessary for management and conservation.

Wildlife researchers found that a combination of extensive fencing, trapping and hunting among adjacent landowners has the greatest impact on reducing or eliminating hog numbers. Missouri is so concerned about the impact of feral hogs that it’s set up a 16-member task force to coordinate the response to the growing wild hog problem there.27

So once again the hunter and hunting proves necessary, in this case, as a tool to control and eradicate a multifaceted threat. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources


26Ibid.

27Ibid., 68.
further emphasizes this in its *2006/07 IOWA Hunting and Trapping Regulations* publication when it gives the following recommendation to hunters encountering or observing feral hogs.

Feral hogs are trying to gain a foothold in certain parts of Iowa. They use heavy cover, are difficult to find and even more difficult to hunt. Hunters are encouraged to watch for feral hogs while out hunting other species and to kill them on sight. It is legal to kill feral hogs on your own property and on public lands where hunting is allowed. *Trespassing on private land to shoot a feral hog is not allowed.*

Feral hogs are not native to Iowa and no permit is needed to take a feral hog.

Feral hogs are aggressive and prone to attack. They spread diseases to humans, pets and domestic animals. These animals damage crops and forest lands which contributes to soil erosion and siltation.[*sic*] They also compete with native wildlife for food. They eat anything they can catch including reptiles, amphibians, deer fawns, bird eggs and newly born livestock.

If you should happen to kill a feral hog, contact the local wildlife biologist….The DNR would like to collect a blood sample. 28

This quote alone authenticates hunting as a necessary tool for the control of feral hogs. If this were untrue, the IDNR would not give such instruction or license to kill them as they do in these instructions to its hunters. Without hunting, feral hogs will increase their burgeoning population and their destructive ways. Admittedly, other tools are necessary for the complete control of this problem, but hunting is an essential element in controlling this predatory nuisance and many other destructive animals as well.

**Hunting provides meat for the needy**

The fact that hunting still today provides food for people who need it establishes a fourth reason for hunting. Most hunters will utilize the entire animal which they harvest. And “the entire animal” is emphasized to include hide, hooves, bones, and other parts!

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Those who do not consume it personally donate the meat to individuals who do use it. This “sharing of the bounty” has long been a common practice among hunters. Formal programs exist for this purpose. In fact, the article cited above which documents the taking of deer in Solon, Ohio tells us that the venison was used to feed the needy.

The deer that DeNicola’s crew kill are donated to the Cleveland Foodbank, which serves six counties in Northeast Ohio, including Cuyahoga and Ashtabula. Since the beginning of this year, 15,000 pounds of Solon-raised venison have been given away to families that cannot afford hamburger. They make the most of it…. “I make meatloaf out of it,” says Crawford. “I use it in spaghetti. The thing about deer meat is, it’s not as greasy as hamburger. So it’s healthier for you. If it wasn’t for the food pantry being here, people would be starving to death. The economy is so blah, you can have a job and still have to come here for groceries.”

“I’m doing this for my son,” says Nancy DeLuia, who is standing in the cold next to Crawford. “He’s homeless.”

Joe Gillette knows he couldn’t feed as many people as he needs to as cheaply without the venison provided by Solon’s program. “It’s really helped us,” he says. “We give one of those bags of meat to everyone who wants one.”

In addition to the meat mentioned above, there are programs in many states that allow the hunter who cannot utilize legally taken deer to be donated to the needy. Such a program exists in Iowa. Iowa’s HUSH program is a wonderful example of hunting and hunters at their best. HUSH is an acrostic adopted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources that stands for Help Us Stop Hunger.

HUSH is a cooperative effort among deer hunters, the Food Bank of Iowa, meat lockers and the Iowa DNR. Hunters and others are encouraged not only to donate deer, but to help in distribution and with donations to fund the program. Some of the deer meat processed through participating lockers is never picked up, and the processing is not paid

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for by the hunters who deposited it. This is not ethical, since the locker owners are left with economic loss for these dead beats. Often the lockers will donate such meat to this program.

The two main goals of HUSH include (1) reducing the deer population while (2) providing high-quality red meat to the needy in Iowa…

Participating lockers skin, bone and grind the meat to two-pound packages of pure ground venison. A local social services agency distributes the venison to needy Iowa families in the area. The 79 lockers that have agreed to participate in 2006-'07 will receive $60 for each processed deer.

Partnering with the Food Bank of Iowa and their affiliates throughout the state, high quality protein many Iowans are lacking in their diet will now be available in the form of pure ground venison. The Food Bank of Iowa will receive $5 for each deer to cover administrative costs.

Nearly 6,000 deer were donated by hunters to HUSH last year, generating more than 1 million meals to Iowa's less fortunate.30

**Conclusion**

To state that hunting is unnecessary has no basis in fact. Research has proven that hunting has great value in the conservation and management of wildlife resources. It is an essential tool in controlling dangerous and destructive animals. From a positive perspective, hunting provides a needed and valuable source of protein for needy people.

These reasons validate hunting as indispensable, valuable and necessary.

In light of these given purposes, how could anyone say with honesty and integrity that hunting is unnecessary today? It fulfills many necessary roles in our society. These benefits extend to a majority of the public, not just to the hunter. So the “hunting is

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unnecessary today” argument falls by the wayside. The conclusion is that hunting is necessary for many reasons. It is a practical answer to many needs as noted.

Answering “Hunting Promotes Violence”

This argument grasps at straws. Research reveals that only a very few people actually promote this view. Further research and analysis of the causes of violence suggests many other things promote violence rather than hunting and fishing. Those who suggest that hunting causes violence usually refine and define the argument further. They focus upon the use of weapons, especially firearms as contributing to violent behavior. Familiarization with firearms is proposed as a main cause of the violence. The opposite is actually shown by experience and testimony. Those who hunt know that the main purpose of weapons is killing, and they also know the damage they can do. Novice hunters are trained to take seriously the handling and use of all weapons. The lives of other humans and of the prey they seek is highly valued by the legitimate hunter.

There are some who state out right that hunting and familiarity with weapons have an impact upon children and promote violence. The following quote is an example of such, but is admittedly an extreme view.

JONESBORO, Arkansas—Why did Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11, on March 24 steal seven pistols and three rifles, set off a fire alarm at Westside Middle School, and as the children ran out, kill classmates Natalie Brooks, Britthney [sic] Varner, Stephanie Johnson, and Paige Ann Herring, plus teacher Shannon Wright?

Probably for the same reason a powerful politician might think he can get away with repeated self-exposure and other acts of uninvited sexual aggression against female subordinates: each alleged offender learned early, when an older man he admired gave him a gun, that normal rules don’t apply to hunters. A hunter can attack any so-called fair game at any time. He can trespass on any property that isn’t posted and guarded. If he doesn’t get what he wants, he can vent his frustration by shooting sitting ducks, as allegedly did Fred Drasner, chief executive officer of both the New York Daily News and U.S. News & World
Report, last December 21, and—although Drasner was an American SPCA board member—pay no public price for the deed. A hunter can even show he’s a good old boy, like U.S. President Bill Clinton and former U.S. President George Bush, by providing photo opportunities as he kills cage-reared ducks or doves at a so-called “hunting preserve,” a euphemism for “canned hunt.” If a hunter kills a person by accident, he usually gets less jail time than many hunting opponents have already served for nonviolent protest. In early April, for instance, the Michigan Court of Appeals overturned the conviction of Brian Cummings, 40, of Parma, for fatally shooting fellow hunter Stacey Bensch, 26, of Toledo, Ohio, in November 1995. Cummings was to have served just nine months in jail and three months on tether for firing two shots, one of which hit Bensch, before sun-up.31

This article clearly places the blame for the referenced school shooting upon hunting and the fact that this boy was introduced to it and to weapons by his father. The view is too simplistic, and many other factors have been tied to school violence rather than hunting. Other conclusions and associations in the article appear unjustified.

A more probable cause of violence has been suggested. The violence in modern media influences people, especially young people in sociopathic behavior. This observation comes from a number of sources which seem to be very credible. The quotes given from Lt. Col. Dave Grossman suggest that video games are to blame. He advocates that violent video games develop in players the similar reactions and patterns of behavior which are developed in soldiers preparing for combat, yet there is no morality, character, or discipline taught to restrain, temper, or restrict the participants.

Through violent programming on television and in movies, and through interactive point-and-shoot video games, modern nations are indiscriminately introducing to their children the same weapons technology that major armies and law enforcement agencies around the world use to “turn off” the midbrain “safety catch” that Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall discovered in World War II…. In terms of combat evolution, this indiscriminate use of combat conditioning techniques on children is the moral equivalent of giving an assault weapon to every child in every industrialized nation in the world. If, hypothetically, this were done,

the vast majority of children would almost certainly not kill anyone with their
assault rifles; but if only a tiny percentage did, then the results would be tragic and
unacceptable. But it is increasingly clear that this is not a hypothetical situation.
Indiscriminate civilian application of combat conditioning techniques as
entertainment has increasingly been identified as a key factor in the worldwide,
skyrocketing violent crime rates outlined earlier. Thus, the influences of weapons
technology can increasingly be observed on the streets of nations around the
world.\[^{32}\]

This is a very strong indictment of games which focus on violent and immediate
reactions to perceived threats. The games allow the bringing to bear of a vast arsenal of
weaponry which is available for choice by the player. He further explains his premise as
follows.

Television, movie and video game violence teaches kids to kill by using the same
mechanisms of classical conditioning, operant conditioning and social learning that
is employed by modern soldiers, but without the safeguards of discipline and
character development.\[^{33}\]

Lt. Col. Grossman is well qualified to speak in these areas. He was called in the
Oklahoma City bombings as an expert witness for the defense, which he refused to do.
Later he was compelled by the prosecution for similar testimony against Timothy
McVeigh.\[^{34}\]

There are many other suggestions of possible causes for the violence exhibited by
young people. Research indicates the preponderance of weight upon these as causes for
this violence, rather than hunting. Grossman’s book and articles bear further reading for
suggestions of possible causes in this line.

\[^{32}\]Lt Col Dave Grossman, “On Combat, Chapter Seven,” Killology Research Group,

\[^{33}\]Ibid.

\[^{34}\]Ibid.
A disturbing reference to a combination of pornography, at least nudity, and of the abuse of women deserves comment. Outdoorsmen decry such association as not being hunting in any form, but as being wickedness that should be avoided. It is called Hunting for Bambi. This obscene idea and offensive behavior has been suggested by some to be a hoax. The following reference will establish that this obscene game is in fact reality. Decent people and especially hunters wish it were a hoax. The following material will establish the truth of this wicked behavior.

It's a new form of adult entertainment, and men are paying thousands of dollars to shoot naked women with paint ball guns. They're coming to Las Vegas to do it. This bizarre new sport has captured the attention of people around the world, but Channel 8 Eyewitness News reporter LuAnne Sorrell is the only person who has interviewed the game's founder.

George Evanthes has never been hunting. "Originally I'm from New York. What am I going to hunt? Squirrels? Someone's cats? Someone's dogs? I don't think so," said Evanthes. Now that he's living in Las Vegas, he's finally getting his chance to put on his camouflage, grab a rifle and pull the trigger. But what's in his scope may surprise you. He's not hunting ducks or deer, he's hunting naked women.35

To combine such immoral and prurient sexual behavior and then seek to associate it with the sport of hunting is beyond imagination. This is the type of association that gives all hunters a bad reputation. This combination of violent behavior and the mistreatment of women are not normal for hunters.

In a culture where right and wrong are commonly questioned, and many times no definition of sin and righteousness are tolerated, such behavior is certain to surface. It has no place in hunting or in fishing. The Arkansas murders, the combination of violence and the sexual depravity of the Hunting for Bambi venture are clearly violations of

decency and good order. They devalue the lives of all the victims, and they demean women. None of these violations of decency are promoted by the majority of outdoorsmen. Hunters should protest such abuse and clearly testify that hunting and its values establish and enhance the value of all living things.

Hunting does not promote violence. Hunters are trained to avoid even accidental damage from the use of their weapons. Though the source of the quote could not be found, a judge mentioned that few young people who came before his court were licensed hunters. He believed that hunting actually increases the value that is placed on life and the law.

**Answering “Hunting is Too Dangerous”**

Hunting can be dangerous. Accidents injure hunters every year. Some injuries are caused to those who observe or are not directly involved in the hunt. Yet a quick and honest comparison of statistics establishes the relative safety of hunting as a recreational pursuit when compared to other avocations. This objection quickly falls by the way when honestly studied.

The obvious, yet false, connection between hunting and safety seems to follow from the fact that hunters use dangerous equipment. Trappers use snares and leg hold traps which can cause injury if improperly used. Improperly used tree stands for hunting deer can be hazards for bow hunters. The fact that weapons are used, such as firearms, bows and arrows, crossbows, spears, and muzzle loading firearms is a given. The utensils used for the processing of game, such as knives, saws, grinders and a variety of others are potentially dangerous.
It would seem, given the above, that hunting and fishing would be much more dangerous than they really are. Outdoors people have taken safety to heart. Virtually all states require extensive training before granting hunting privileges. Most states offer many other seminars for outdoor enthusiasts to learn to safely enjoy the sport of choice. Snow mobile safety, boating classes, four wheeler safety events, and a huge array of others are offered. Equipment has been modified to promote safety. Muzzle loading weapons often are constructed with a double safety system built into the weapon. The user must intentionally disable both safeties before the weapon will discharge.

Research has shown that hunting accidents which result in death often involve the use of watercraft. Boats capsize and those thrown into the water may drown or die from hypothermia. Waterfowl hunting using boats usually occurs in cold seasons of the year, and when a person is thrust into the water, hypothermia quickly attacks.

Hunting Facts

Each year more hunters die from drowning and the effects of hypothermia than from gunshot wounds. Most of the accident reports from waterborne hunting fatalities are not dramatic stories. The hunter didn't succumb in an "Outdoor Life and Death" struggle with a twenty-foot python or enrage a hippopotamus that attacked their boat. Rather, the accident reports usually read: "Fell out of boat reaching for a decoy and never resurfaced" or "Capsized boat while standing to take a look at passing ducks...struggled briefly in the cold water, then seemed to become paralyzed before help could arrive."36

The same site gives advice on how to safely prepare for hunting from a boat, lists the equipment necessary for safety, and emphasizes that proper maintenance of the boat is a must. It gives strong warnings concerning the dangers of unsafe behavior while

hunting from watercraft. This site offers safety courses which instruct on the proper
operation of boats. The following quote strengthens these warnings.

The Weather and Environment

The weather and surrounding water conditions are important factors to consider
when setting out on a hunting trip. Most water-related hunting fatalities occur on
smaller bodies of water late in the year, when water and air temperature are lower,
and there is a greater frequency of storms. If the weather looks bad or if there is a
forecast for upcoming storms, don't risk going out. If you do get caught in a squall,
head for shore diagonally to the waves. Move passengers and equipment into the
center of the boat to improve stability.

Hunters deliberately seek out less populated areas. In these locations, there is less
opportunity for someone to find you in an emergency. It is wise to let someone
know the general area you will be in by leaving them a float plan.\(^{37}\)

Overall, deaths and injuries related to hunting activities have shown a steady
decline over the years. Statistics confirm this as true. The following observations are
taken from a report done by the National Shooting Sports Foundation. “Hunting-related
Incidents. The most complete annual data (2002) from the International Hunter
Education Association indicate 93 fatal and 805 non-fatal hunting injuries were recorded
in the U.S.”\(^{38}\) Compared to these numbers, baseball produced 162,527 injuries.\(^{39}\)

The following facts add to the consideration of the safety of hunting. These are
taken from the same site. Shotguns were involved in the majority of the accidents.
Hunting for deer accounted for nearly half of the incidents. Turkey hunting came second
involving 10% of the incidents causing injury. The single largest factor to cause hunting
accidents was the failure of the hunter to properly identify the target before firing their

\(^{37}\)Ibid.

\(^{38}\)National Shooting Sports Foundation, “HUNTING One of the Safest Forms of Recreation in
America,” National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.,

\(^{39}\)Ibid.
weapon. Firearms were involved in 1% of unintentional fatalities in the home, while falls were the most dangerous, numbering 12,800 and involved 34% of the time.\textsuperscript{40}

Firearm-related Fatalities Down 48%

Over the last decade, the number of fatalities involving firearms (excluding homicide and suicide) has dropped 48%.

This decline is attributed to a number of factors including free firearm locking devices shipped with new firearms, industry-supported firearm safety education programs like Project ChildSafe\textsuperscript{6}, and educational efforts by groups like the National Shooting Sports Foundation and the National Rifle Association and state-affiliated hunter education programs as well as technological advances in firearm designs and manufacturing process…. Compared to other principle types of unintentional fatalities in the United States, firearms has had the largest percentage decrease in the past decade.\textsuperscript{41}

The alcohol factor must not be denied or overlooked in considering safety while hunting. All hunters have been repeatedly told that alcohol and gunpowder do not mix well! Even the manufacturers and suppliers of alcoholic products emphasize the necessity of separating these two activities. The best choice is not to drink alcohol at all while hunting or fishing. But if the decision is made to consume alcohol, it must never be done before or while hunting or handling firearms. Doing so courts disaster.

Every sensible hunter knows that alcohol or drugs don’t mix with guns and boating. Drugs or alcohol seriously impair judgement \textit{sic} and coordination. You know your aim can be affected by them, but did you know that 50% of all reported boating fatalities are alcohol-related? Your hunting trip should be enjoyable and safe. You can ensure that it will be with prior planning and diligence while out on the water.\textsuperscript{42}

In conclusion, objecting to hunting because it is too dangerous is completely without merit. Facts revealed by research affirm hunting as far safer than most sports.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.

These statistics alone reveal the errors of those who object to it on this basis. The anti-hunting, anti-firearm ownership crowd must face the truth. Hunting is not dangerous when compared to other forms of recreation. Firearms are merely tools.

**Answering “Hunting Fosters the Extinction of Animals”**

The way something is said makes all the difference. The phrasing of a question often leads the one questioned to answer improperly or inaccurately. Hunters admit that over-hunting and unregulated hunting have caused or contributed to the extinction of some animals. Yet it must be noted that hunting and hunters alone are not totally responsible for this sad history. In fact, hunters contribute in significant ways to the preservation of animals, and they can cite tremendous victories in growing populations of animals that were once endangered.

Mistakes of the past create miserable commentaries, and specific examples are heartbreaking. The United States of America has experienced its own examples of animals that have been forced into extinction. The following briefly illustrates a few of these conservation mistakes.

Though hunting is now fairly well regulated by law, historically it was a chief cause of extinction in Southern Appalachia. The first to go were the large mammals. When Europeans first settled here in the late eighteenth century, for example, woodland bison were still plentiful. But hunters quickly learned to ambush them at natural salt licks, where the bison congregated. By 1800 they had become rare. Within a decade or two they were extinct.\(^{43}\)

One of the most infamous of extinction stories is that of the passenger pigeon. This debacle of mismanagement is well known. The native bird was once extremely

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abundant but was driven to extinction. Perhaps all of the details and causes are not
documented or available in this next century. Nolt gives us some details, and adds
another sad example as well. Neither shows hunters or Americans at their best.

Two remarkable Southern Appalachian birds, the passenger pigeon and the
Carolina parakeet were hunted to extinction early in the 1900s. The Carolina
parakeet, the only member of the parrot family native to the eastern United States,
was a large and flamboyantly colored bird, about thirteen inches long, mostly bright
green, but with a yellow head and neck and orange cheeks and forehead. Carolina
Parakeets were exterminated because they raided orchards, because ladies prized
their feathers for hats, and because their bright colors made them useful for target
practice.

The passenger pigeon may have been the most abundant bird species on earth.
Ornithologists estimate their precolonial [sic] population at two to three billion.
Their extensive winter roosting grounds along river bottoms in the Southern
Appalachians are recalled in the names of two rivers, the Pigeon and the Little
Pigeon, and in the name of the city of Pigeon Forge.

Despite their numbers, the passenger pigeons succumbed quickly. Market hunters
across the eastern United States blasted hundreds of millions from their roosts or
from the sky. The meat was shipped by rail to New York and Chicago, where it had
become fashionable. Well before the passenger pigeons vanished, there were
warning signs and scattered calls for conservation, but most people seemed to think
that so numerous and familiar a bird could never be eliminated.

Their last precipitous decline surprised even the conservationists. As their numbers
fell, the pigeons ceased to mate. Apparently their mating instinct was triggered in a
way that we will now never understand by something in the presence of the great
flock. The last known passenger pigeon, a female named Martha, died in the
Cincinnati zoo in 1914.

Sadly, in significant parts of the world, hunting is still unregulated and abused so
that numerous species are still in danger, and this endangered wildlife creates a long list.
The United States has made efforts to curtail these abuses, but they still occur. Black
market hunting and illegal animal products are still available to those willing to pay the
price. Unfortunately the greed of some allows this illegal activity to continue.

44Ibid.
In the United States, many of these abuses have been corrected. Much of the pressure to make the necessary changes in course was because hunters demanded the changes. These demands were backed by contributions of energy, money, and other resources. Some genuine successes are listed in the quote below.

Hunting is a blood sport, but modern hunting has not caused the extinction of any animal species. In fact, since the early 1900s, many of the most popular game species in the United States have become more abundant, thanks to the curtailing of market hunting, the development of scientific wildlife management to determine seasons and limits, and help from the revenues generated by the sales of hunting licenses and ammunition that have been used for habitat protection and restoration. In the 1920s, there were roughly 300,000 Whitetail Deer in the United States. Today there are more than 27 million. During the Great Depression, elk numbered 50,000; today there are at least twenty times that many. The pronghorn antelope population of the Dust Bowl days has grown from 30,000 in 1920 to more than 4 million. The wild turkey population has skyrocketed from 30,000 in 1920 to more than 4 million. The United States bison herd, which in 1900 was no more than 500, with only 39 in the wild in Yellowstone National Park, now numbers 120,000 and is growing rapidly on farms, hunting preserves, state and federal parks, and wildlife sanctuaries. There were slightly more than a million Canada geese in the 1940’s when my father started taking me out to the duck blind. Today, the Canada goose population is 2.5 million and growing. Wood ducks, which nest in trees, were nearly extinct in the late 1800s and early 1900s, due to clear-cut lumbering in eastern forests, which decimated their nesting habitat. Wood ducks today are the most common breeding waterfowl in the United States, thanks to the massive campaign to put out human-made nesting boxes and to the refinement of modern forestry practices.  

It is evident that hunters and other conservationists have had a wonderful impact on the restoration of many endangered species of animals. Swan’s numbers need updated as they are over ten years old, but these and modern numbers paint the picture bright and clear. Hunters have done a wonderful job of changing past mistakes into lessons that have continuing success in this and ongoing times. Hunters continue to volunteer

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significant amounts of time to engender the welfare and the restoration of animals to their original habitat. The results have been nothing short of phenomenal.

The wild turkey is a prime example. Iowa had shown a decrease in timber land from its original state when first settled. Along with the clear cutting went the populations of wild turkey which inhabited much of that same timber. In fact, the decrease in hard wood forests, and the over-hunting of these birds had combined to essentially eliminate them from the state of Iowa. “Unfortunately, wild turkeys were eliminated from Iowa by the early 1900’s due to habitat loss and partly because of uncontrolled subsistence hunting.”

The efforts to restore the wild turkey were renewed in the early 1900’s, but they were totally unsuccessful. The efforts focused on raising birds in pens and then releasing them into the wild. “By 1960, no known wild turkey populations existed in Iowa.” After this, some attempts were made to introduce some subspecies into the state, but they were unsuccessful. Other efforts saw great success.

The first release of Eastern wild turkeys was in 1966 in Lee County. The population response of these turkeys was phenomenal - survival of released birds, reproduction, and poult survival were all excellent. The success of this Eastern subspecies stocking led to an additional stocking that also proved successful. By 1971 it was obvious that the Eastern subspecies was the turkey to use in future restoration attempts.

Since the initial 1965 release, 3,063 Eastern wild turkeys have been released at 220 sites at a stocking rate of approximately 3 adult gobblers and 10 hens per site. Nearly all sites are considered successful, however the most recent stockings are still being evaluated. No sites are currently considered to be unsuccessful. Most sites were opened to hunting after populations were established, usually about 5

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47 Ibid.
years post-stockling. Restoration efforts by the IDNR during the last 2 decades have returned wild turkeys to about 95% of the remnant timber stands in the state. 48

The efforts above were joint ventures by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF hereafter) and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR hereafter). The partnership of private donations of time, resources, and money was greatly successful. The NWTF is a great example of hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts combining their efforts and means into the restoration of animals. The growing emphasis by this consortium of concerned people has included a growing focus on habitat development, including research on food plots, hard wood restoration projects, and the further development of public and private lands into proper environments for healthy animals of many kinds.

The NWTF is a grassroots, nonprofit organization with 545,000 members in 50 states, Canada, Mexico and 14 other foreign countries. It supports scientific wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands as well as wild turkey hunting as a traditional North American sport.

In 1973, the National Wild Turkey Federation was founded in Fredericksburg, Va. At that time, there were an estimated 1.3 million wild turkeys and 1.5 million turkey hunters. Shortly after its founding, the NWTF moved to Edgefield, S.C., where it is headquartered today.

Thanks to the work of federal, state and provincial wildlife agencies and the NWTF's many volunteers and partners, there are now more than 7 million wild turkeys and nearly 3 million turkey hunters. Turkey hunting has become the fastest growing form of hunting and has the second-highest number of participants of any type of hunting.

Since 1985, more than $230 million NWTF and cooperator dollars have been spent on upholding hunting traditions and conserving more than 11.3 million acres of wildlife habitat. Hunters have also benefited as the NWTF has worked tirelessly to

48Ibid.
support our hunting heritage and protect and promote laws that increase hunting opportunity and safety.\textsuperscript{49}

The growth and effectiveness of the NWTF has been mirrored by other organizations of like kind. Their names and the species they promote and feature are too numerous to describe here, yet the exponential growth of these groups shows the popularity of hunting and the willingness of those who enjoy it to back their efforts in tangible and meaningful ways.

The conclusion is that over-hunting, market-hunting, illegal, and unregulated hunting did contribute to the extinction of some animals. Hunting was not the only factor in these distressing mistakes. As opportunities presented, the hunter has shown himself and his peers proud in influencing and enabling the comeback of numerous species to levels that rival or are larger than ever before in this country. The accusation that hunting fosters the extinction of animals as an objection to sport hunting is proven false. The research has shown the opposite to be true. In fact hunters and hunting have made significant contributions to bringing many endangered species back from the very brink of extinction. This argument is decided in favor of the hunter and hunting.

**Conclusion**

There are multifaceted practical reasons for hunting in contemporary times. Conservation, the removal of dangerous and destructive animals, the provision of food for the needy, and a range of other practical reasons clearly substantiate the necessity of hunting. Though the fight will continue, hunters must assert the legitimate nature of the sport. Publicity is needed to promote the value and necessity of the sport. The economic

impact of eradicating hunting from our culture has not been addressed in this chapter, but that impact alone would be devastating to numerous local economies. Hunting is necessary!
CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

The effort put into this section is a bit like the effort that must be invested into the successful quest for a trophy animal. To harvest a trophy animal requires observation, time, interpretation of the sign, learning the habits of the animal, and much more! These things are necessary to success in hunting. This is true of learning as well. So much research has been accomplished. From this research, data has been obtained. The data has been collected, collated, categorized, analyzed, evaluated, and applied to the problem. This data has become valuable as these procedures have been carried out. The object of this section is to present the data so that practical applications may be made to the problem. General conclusions have been formulated and when utilized they may foster success in using outdoor events for the purposes of discipleship and evangelism.

Research showed that electronic media is the most desirable format for obtaining responses to the questionnaires which were used. Traditional mail is being used less today. When electronic media could not be used, a personal interview was the next most effective means for gathering responses. The speed and ease of electronic responses in checking boxes and using text boxes were more desirable to those who were polled and generated the best quality of response as well as the most numbers of respondents. A recommendation is made for others using questionnaires to use electronic means for responses.

It is of interest to reference those who did respond through the questionnaires. Of the total respondents, thirty percent were speakers or professionals, and the other seventy percent were pastors or committee chairmen. One respondent from the speakers group also qualified himself as a pastor. He completed both questionnaires.
Among the speakers polled, two said the questionnaire did not apply to their style of ministry or event. They are not included in the numbers used in formulating the results. Though these two did not complete the questionnaire, they did give advice and encouragement to pursue the utilization of the outdoor experience for ministry. Both of these persons are using outdoors oriented events to reach people. One ministry focuses upon hunters and fishermen being mentors to young people one-to-one. The other uses dinners, emphasizes the clubs, or what this effort calls a rendezvous, and also utilizes competition oriented events such as are proposed. He has used bow shooting and fishing contests for ministry purposes. These competitions usually involve food of some type, and a brief Gospel presentation. This last source emphasizes the necessity of using food.

This research revealed the interesting conclusion that churches are conducting most of these events. The speakers identified churches as the ones conducting the events seventy five percent of the time, and organizations the other twenty five percent of the time. An expected result from the pastors was that the church carried out the ministry in most cases. About twenty percent of the pastors mentioned that an organization or a committee had conducted the event they referenced for the questionnaire.

An observation becomes a lesson. The pastor must be vitally involved in this style of outreach or it will not be effective. Certainly they may delegate the work, planning, and effort to another, or others, yet the real power to make this style of evangelistic effort a success will land squarely upon the pastor’s shoulders. The leadership of the pastor and the vision to undertake such means to evangelize or disciple is essential to success.

Second, the church must involve the members in order to mobilize the resources necessary to conduct such events successfully. Some churches do little to target un-
churched or pre-Christians in their locale. Churches should seek more relevant methods to evangelize. Outdoor focused ministries will reach some that will be unreachable in other ways. Responses from the research identified these outdoor focused events as valuable in accomplishing this goal.

The conclusion of the research is that hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities are being used for outreach. This field of ministry is far bigger than the scope of any one consideration. But the specific use of hunting and of fishing is the focus of this quest for practical ways to reach people and connect them with the Creator. The recommendation from the research is that hunting and fishing should be used for evangelism and discipleship. If hunting and fishing are not in vogue, then other sports related events should be conducted. To not use sports of some kind in the current cultural setting is to ignore and waste a valuable means of evangelism.

The variety of means and the ingenuity of those who are accomplishing ministry utilizing the outdoor experience are amazing. Attention has been given earlier in chapter one to two successful ministries that are utilizing hunting and fishing for evangelism, but there are a variety of others. The Lord Jesus says, “Come be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!” Mk 1:17 NLT Through research and the application of its lessons, the goal has been learning to fish for men using hunting as a primary focus. Presented in chapter six will be practical guidelines for using specific events focused on hunting and fishing in order to reach people. The questionnaires used in the research focused upon specific issues that contribute to or subtract from the events’ success and effectiveness. The results are given in the following narrative.
Discussion of the results

The following topics which impact the success or failure of an event are the subject of the following sections. The timing of an event is of crucial importance. Just as in hunting, the purpose of the event must be spelled out, and the target clearly identified. “Location, location, location” is said by those in real estate to be the three most crucial factors in the value of a property; the research addresses this subject. Speakers are important. Some thought will be given to how important speakers are, who should be considered, and how they should be treated. Is food important to the success of these events or not? This seems to be a very important item from the research. Money is always a resource to be considered, and some questions addressed this arena. How do you evaluate the success of the event? Should we do this type outreach again? If so, can we be more effective? What type of attendance, and who comes to the events? Finally, the questionnaire gave consideration to specific advice from the respondents. These areas will be considered below.

Timing

Timing is always critical. When hunting whitetail deer, the hunter always needs to be in the tree stand at the right time. The right time is determined by the habits of the quarry. The hunter must be present when the quarry will present an optimal target. Just as timing is important to the success of the outdoorsman, the timing of an event is important to the success of an event. It is possibly the most important of all the considerations for planning a successful ministry.

In the surveys, six questions dealt with timing. Does the season of the year impact the success of the event? What season is recommended? Should the timing of the event coincide with the opening of a particular hunting or fishing season? Was a certain
day of the week better than another? What time of day is most beneficial? Should this be an all day event, or should it be longer than a single day? The answers to these questions will provide concrete guidelines in forming a successful strategy for planning an event.

Among the speakers, the recommendation was substantially on the side of winter, with the fall being the other major choice. However, the fall season was not recommended because of its proximity to a season opening, such as hunting season. Saturday was the majority choice for the day of the event. Of those choosing other days, Fridays and weekends were most recommended.

Reasons given by the professionals for their choices were that work schedules were not as much in conflict, that families could attend together, and that people would not have to use vacation to attend on these days. One responding speaker said that men do not like to give up Saturdays, but are often looking for something to do on Friday nights. He went on to caution that local sports events should not conflict with the ministry event. He also mentioned that set up and cooking could be more readily conducted on Fridays.

The pastors were more divided when considering seasonal timing, though the majority chose winter with fall following closely. They universally recommended the season they had already identified as being the right choice for their own event. This will tell us that choices must be made for correct fit to our own area of the country. Forty-five percent of the pastors said the timing of the event was not chosen because it corresponded to a particular hunting season’s opening day. However, some mentioned that this was wise to consider in choosing a subject and a time for a game dinner. The pastors overwhelmingly choose Saturday as the best day for the event. Friday nights came in a
far second, and only one pastor recommended a weeknight. One pastor suggested that the un-churched may be more ready to attend on a Saturday. Another pastor suggested the day before the Super Bowl® because most other events choose not to conflict with this big weekend. A pastor who serves all wild game suggests that the game dinner should be well after hunting seasons to allow adequate processing for use in the dinner.

The time of day question received interesting answers. Pastors recommended afternoon or evening, while speakers universally answered evening! Most pastors did not use or recommend an all day event. Thirty three percent of the speakers replied that their events included the entire day.

What can be applied? The event is best conducted on a Saturday. The appeal of an approaching season should be considered but should not dictate the timing of the event. The winter is most desirable since people are cooped up inside and looking for something to do on winter days. In fact, the time between late fall or early winter seasons should be given precedence. Afternoons or evenings could be used effectively, and this should be chosen to fit with the individual church.

The timing of an event is very important for planning, but more important than the decision to select a certain time is the decision to do something to reach people. Choosing the wrong time and having a smaller crowd is better than doing nothing at all.

Purpose

Without purpose nothing should be attempted. Proper identification of the target is a fundamental issue for safety and success while hunting. This basic rule is drilled into the novice hunter all through the hunter education class that qualifies him or her for a
hunting license or permit. This same principle is true for those who plan events for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship.

The research shows that the main purpose for conducting such events should be for evangelism. Both the pastors and the speakers responding affirmed this answer. Some listed pre-evangelism as their goal indicating a wise understanding that our target person is not easy to reach. Often they are completely un-churched, and in fact intentionally avoid church. This attitude may result from past bad experiences in church or with someone who claims to be a Christ-follower who pushed too hard and closed the door of opportunity for a witness. Often the harvest of the soul of an outdoors person for the Lord will come only after months or years of growing friendship. We earn the right to speak Christ into their lives, using the outdoors as a common experience.

The below listed responses are helpful in understanding the intent of those hosting these events. The responses are those given on the form. These were taken directly from the computer generated forms. The format of the responses did not always allow the identification of those responding.

From Pastors who hosted these events. The exact question used on the form was “What was the main purpose of your event?” The responses follow.

“This event was evangelistic and for strengthening men in the church through fellowship.” (The author would call this discipleship.)

“The event affords great contact for future witness and evangelism.”

“A game dinner to just say “hi” to other hunters and let them know they are welcome at the church.”

“It is a non-threatening event in which the Gospel will be presented during the evening dinner program but not during the afternoon hunting and fishing workshops.”
“We wanted the opportunity to present the Gospel and to expose the Church to individuals in the community who never have been to our church or attend liberal or non-Bible preaching churches.”

“Evangelism and Pre-evangelism. [sic] It breaks down barriers.”

“We try to get people to come that won’t have anything else to do with the church.”
(This is from a committee chairman of a local church event.)

From speakers who responded to the same question.

“Advancing friendships already existing with unsaved – presenting the Gospel one more time.” [sic]

“Our event is designed to get the Gospel to fellows that might never respond to any other program offered by the church.”

One would wonder if those conducting these events really had a concrete purpose in mind! The majority of those in both categories did not respond with any written comment to this question, other than to check the box which identified their main purpose. The author questions if a concrete purpose or mission statement could be given by those who mobilized people for such a ministry. Such a slogan or purpose statement would definitely allow better communication of the purpose. This would contribute to more willing participation to successfully complete the event and its purpose. Is the purpose to have an event or to accomplish a goal? The purpose should be the focus, not just the conducting of an event! This lesson will be incorporated into the next chapter on how to plan such an event.

A follow up question was asked regarding the purpose of the event: Was this event successful in its purpose? The overwhelming answer of both pastors and speakers was “yes!” In fact there was only one “no” response from all those received! The pastor who answered “no” regarding the success of his event is somewhat confusing as he later says the event was successful. He also said that he would moderately recommend the
event, that he had two hundred to three hundred attend, and that there were eight who
confessed Christ as personal Savior! He also plans to have future events on an annual
basis. If that is non-success, most would welcome it!

Below are some responses from those who added comments to the questionnaire
under the subject of “Was this event successful in its purposes?”

From Pastors

“It is definitely a drawing for the sports minded person. We have done this
workshop/dinner program now for fourteen years and have seen many non-church
people attend. We consider it an entry point to build bridges with the people of our
church. We don’t base its success on how many people come to faith in Christ so
much as how many non-churched people came who were exposed to the
presentation of the Gospel. The key is relationship-building. It may take 5 such
entry-point events to see some people respond to the Gospel.”

“We have had an average of ten percent of those attending to make first time
professions of faith.”

“It was promoted as an outreach event and a large portion of attendees were
unbelievers.”

 “…sowing watering, fertilizing or harvesting is included in the outreach.”

“We had five or six make professions of faith, and made new contacts and friends
of our ministry at that time.”

“One thousand people – four families added to the church within three weeks.”

“Though we have not had all of the evangelistic ‘success’ we had initially hoped
for in terms of converts, we have had some and it has been very successful in
introducing our church to the larger community. Moreover, even if conversions are
few, we still have an opportunity to share the Gospel with hundreds of lost men.”

From Speakers

“If the guy was a stranger when he came, he’ll be a stranger when he leaves. Real
fruit is from already existing friendships that are cultivated through the event.”

“There were five people who accepted the Lord.”

“It depends on prayer and what was done in preparation for the event by the
hosting church.”
All of the above speak well of the success which they have enjoyed, and some of the results are really amazing. In a day and in a culture when evangelism is difficult at best, the game dinner seems to have consistent results in presenting the Gospel, developing on-going contact with those who attend, and in God’s time, seeing the Gospel seed bear fruit unto eternal life in individuals who might be unreachable with other means.

Location

Where is the best place to host an event? This subject will be general in its scope, as well as in the answers to this question. The answers vary some with whether one chooses to perform a game dinner, a rendezvous, or a challenge event. The intent of the research was to determine if the location chosen could be detrimental to the purpose of evangelism, and the question looked to determine whether churches should rent a facility rather than conduct the event in their own church building. Would the un-churched come to such an event if it were held in a church? The answer determined that visitors seem willing to come to a church for such an event when the subject matter interests them. Could this fact imply that these people do not like the way church is done? Or is it another reason? Beneficial research could address this problem, but that is outside this subject matter.

Our speakers who responded mentioned that a church facility was the most commonly used location. Twenty-one percent responded that other than a church facility was used, and some of these responded that their events were held out of doors. When asked what place was best, the same percentages recommended the same locations, that a church was best. Asked about the importance of the location, the results varied. Forty-
three percent responded with “moderate” as to the importance of the location. Thirty-six percent said the location was of high importance. The lessons may better be learned from the limited verbal comments that follow.

“We want our friends to be at home in our gathering place. When they have need, they will remember where the place was and it won’t be strange or scary since they were already there and had a great time.”

“If the building won’t accommodate the kind of crowd you would like to gather, then a rented facility works fine and I have no problem either way.”

“People come to expect to hear the Bible if it is held in a church.”

“Host incredible outdoor adventure – people will come for the event and then you can share the Gospel with them – in a non-threatening environment.”

“For us it is a way to draw men to a church event, but if the church did not have adequate facilities there would be no reason not to use rented facilities.”

The researcher expected to consistently hear from the speakers that ministry would be more effective in a place other than a church. That assumption seems inaccurate from the professional’s point of view. Will the pastors and planners of game dinners concur?

The responses of the pastors are interesting and varied. However, some clear concerns are shown. Some of the pastors seem to be more concerned that conducting the event at the church will keep some people away. More pastors feared this than professional speakers. The comments listed later will substantiate this statement. One-half of the pastors conducted their events at the church or a facility of the church. However, only one-third recommend conducting it there again. In fact, the results showed a tie in opinion between the recommended location for the event. The church and a rented facility had exactly the same percent. They both had thirty-three percent and
the outdoors only received a small fourteen percent. Others responding did not register a recommendation as to a location.

In the contemporary church, the needs of seekers are strongly emphasized. Could this be the reason pastors are so aware of location issues? This could be the reality that showed these results. Some of the following comments register their concern. But the opinions show a large divergence rather than a consensus.

“Someplace on the church property so the un-churched identify their good experience with the church.”

“School cafeterias work well.”

“For our purposes the church is best because we want to get them to our front porch.”

“We find it a great opportunity to introduce our church to folks who might not otherwise enter the building.”

“We recommend not having a Wild Game Banquet at the church because some will not come to the church.”

“At the church if you are able to host it at the church. This provides other opportunities to expose them to your church ministry. Once you outgrow your building then you will need to secure another location.”

“We used a conservation club in our town.”

“It depends on your facilities and capabilities. It may make for higher retention of the attendees from the dinner to the program by having it in our auditorium. We also have top quality sound equipment there, and that is a must.”

“We wanted a ‘neutral’ place that was non-threatening for men to gather, yet a good place for food, fellowship and effective communication.”

“We want people to be familiar with our church building and identify with us that way.”

We had over nine hundred at this year’s Wild Game Dinner. We have held the event the last two years in our Family Life Center

“We like maintaining a connection to our church and making men feel comfortable within its walls. Also we have a large gymnasium in which we host most of the event, so it doesn’t feel ‘churchy’ to most of them.”
Answering the question as to whether the location was of high, moderate, or slight importance gave interesting results. Eight percent of the pastors responded that the location was slight in its importance. Thirty-six percent responded that location was of moderate importance, and the majority of the pastors, fifty-six percent to be exact, responded that it was of high importance. This last figure came in lower than was anticipated by the researcher.

The author is curious to know how those that attend the event would respond to these questions. Where would they prefer the event to be held and why would they prefer that location? These questions would be difficult to research but interesting if a mode could be devised to gather such information.

The author expected that a more neutral location would be suggested by both the speakers and the pastors, but this did not prove true from the research. What are some conclusions regarding location? The location of the event is of some importance. The ability to handle the anticipated crowd, provide the multimedia needed, and other practical concerns need to be considered when choosing a location. However, it is most important to do something to reach lost people whatever location is chosen for the event! Outdoors people are passionate about hunting and fishing. This passion may be used to reach them. Use the best building available for outdoor events, but use something!

Speaker

The speaker at such events should be chosen carefully. This person can be an invaluable draw for the event. The wrong speaker can definitely detract from the success or even determine failure for the event. A variety of questions that concern the choice of the speaker for a game dinner are addressed below.
What is the most critical issue in choosing a speaker? Focus groups on the subject at hand share that the most critical issue is that he is appropriate regarding the time used to present the topic and his testimony of a relationship with Christ. Those participating in the group related repeatedly how a speaker who had the audience’s attention and was being received well, had lost the attention of the listeners by going over the time allotted.

What topic should the speaker address? The pastors who participated in the survey had a strong preference and opinion that hunting was most appropriate as a topic for the speaker at a game dinner. Only seven percent of them chose fishing as the best choice. Three percent answered with “other” as their choice. This seems a very significant and clear opinion, and should be heeded when planning.

Should the speaker be a pastor? Two-thirds of the pastors recommend that a speaker for such an event should not be a pastor! They basically said that a professional should be chosen. Focus groups dealing with this subject agreed overwhelmingly. The primary draw of most events is the speaker. Choosing a speaker who is a well recognized authority can draw more people to the event with the recognition or mention of their name. An important recommendation is to get a well known speaker who can also present the Gospel clearly and in a concise manner. The speaker must be able to properly bring the hearer to respond and make a decision for Christ. Every person in sales knows that a good sales person must ask the client for the order to be effective. Some will not like this comparison, but the speaker must be able to motivate the attendees to receive the Lord and the forgiveness for their sin that God offers through Jesus Christ. This is
crucial with regard to the purpose of evangelism which earlier research shows is the point at hand.

Should the speaker be a believer? This next question was the strongest “yes” response to this point in the research. Only one pastor said “no.” Some have tried having any speaker available who may deal with a particular subject. After the speaker has completed his speaking, another person seeks to very briefly present the Gospel. From such an overwhelming opinion, it seems the speaker should be a personal follower of Jesus Christ. The author would suggest that non Christians might be used for the locally focused rendezvous that will be recommended later. Since the focus of such meetings is monthly and will be repeated, smaller, shorter plantings of the Gospel could be used. The expectation is that evangelism is a process rather than a one time event. Relationships should be cultivated by on-going contact.

The pastors recommend that the speaker present the Gospel. The same responses came from each participant. Curiosity presented itself as research proceeded regarding the “no” response to this question. The same pastor who responded “no” to the speaker being a believer also responded “no” to the question of whether the speaker should present the Gospel. This makes sense after reviewing his verbal comment that they use the vendors to present the seminar and do not expect them to present a personal testimony or a message of salvation to the attendees. The overwhelming majority expected the speaker to present the Gospel. When a noted and credentialed outdoor speaker gives a personal testimony, then presents Christ as the Savior, it is effective, and people do respond to the invitation to believe.
“Did the speaker present the Gospel or fulfill the purpose of the event?” Focus groups addressing this question revealed that the majority of speakers did a credible job of connecting with the audience but some did not clearly present the Gospel. The writer wondered if this opinion was shared by the pastors polled. The voice of the pastors responded that the speakers did present the Gospel, fulfilling the purpose of the event. Seventy-two percent said this was so, yet the balance of these pastors said the effectiveness was slight or moderate. A lesson learned is to screen the speakers by consulting with other pastors where the professional speaker has ministered. Ask for references, and then ask questions clearly and repeatedly as necessary. The Bible principle is that people must clearly declare the message and then rely on God to give the increase. Make sure the presenter can do so in a concise and accurate fashion, or choose another speaker.

How much should a speaker be paid? Money and funding are always concerns for most churches. What was the practice of the pastors regarding honorarium and expenses for the speakers they invited to their events? The responses were very diverse. The majority of pastors utilized an honorarium plus expenses which they furnished to the speaker. Many responded that they were required to furnish a fee to the speaker, and some were also required to furnish the expenses additionally. A strong voice at one focus group reflected that a speaker requiring a specific fee was distasteful to him. However, it would be easy for a church to undervalue a speaker, and the estimate is that most churches would do so.

Some professional speakers will only accept an invitation if guaranteed a specific amount. Often that required fee seems high compared to what pastors receive as
compensation. The principle that a laborer is worthy of his reward applies in this situation since a higher number will attend the event if they recognize the speaker, and this is the goal of having the event.

When reflecting on this matter, one can understand a speaker’s practice of requiring a specific fee. Most speakers and preachers have experienced times when as a guest speaker their expenses are not even met. That experience is what drives a lot of professionals to specify a required amount before they accept an offer to speak. Some send a contract before making a commitment to the event with the conditions and terms spelled out. Some require travel expenses paid up front so they will not lose out if the event is cancelled, or if the speaker’s fee is not paid. Having a written contract with the details specifically addressed is the recommended practice so that all will have complete understanding and agreement on what is to be done. This avoids conflict and misunderstanding later.

The minimum recommendation for a hosting church would be to give a generous love offering and cover all of the expenses of the speaker. This remuneration should be specified as honorarium and a separate distinction of expense reimbursement including travel expense, food allowance, accommodations and other necessary expenses. Treating the speakers as the Lord would treat them, with generosity, is the recommended practice for hosting churches and organizations.

How important is it that a speaker is recommended to the church or the organization hosting the game dinner? Research responses show that it is very high! The responses showed that sixty-four percent of the pastors chose a speaker that was recommended to them. The word of mouth method of advertising is the best today, as it
has been in the past. Choosing someone who does not come with a personal recommendation of a friend or an associate may be successful, but is not the norm in choosing speakers for game dinners. The research confirmed this as accurate.

Verbal responses from the responding pastors help us understand more accurately. They verify the diverse practices and opinions regarding speakers. Again the lesson to do something of this nature to reach the people around us with the Gospel is at the forefront of importance.

“Over 15 years we have used several pastors with varying degrees of expertise as well as with professional experience. We have never used a professional sportsman speaker.”

“We used a local church person who was an expert on fishing.”

“The one man who heads it up for us went to another Sportsmen’s Banquet to hear the speaker; we have had speakers recommended.”

“I knew the speaker as a fellow pastor and expert turkey caller.”

“We are networking with other ministries as to speaker selections.”

“Speaker must be a mature believer that can clearly use an aspect of the outdoors to present the Gospel.”

“Not all speakers were pastors, but all were mature believers.”

“He was a member of our church, a former pastor, and an avid outdoorsman.”

“Most of your top flight presenters have stated honorarium fees today. They must be booked far in advance. I locate my speakers entirely by word of mouth, and use two or three individuals as sounding boards for evaluating other potential speakers regarding a speaker’s testimony, lifestyle, commitment to Christ, ability to present a clear, powerful, and complete Gospel as well as desire to draw the net during the invitation. I look for speakers who are doing ministry, not doing the speaking profession and circuit only.”

“I knew the speaker personally as an evangelist, then found out about his interest and burden to reach men with fishing seminars.”

“We did not have a speaker…we were just out there to fish that day and fellowship.”
“We were asked by another church if we would like to share their speaker and split traveling expenses.”

“We have vendors do the seminars.”

“Though we have used paid outside speakers in the past, we have been far more successful evangelistically using a mature man from within our congregation who hunts than with outside speakers.”

What can be learned from this section dealing with speaker issues addressed from the perspective of the pastors? Choose speakers who clearly present the Gospel, effectively bring the hearers to a decision, and encourage them to trust Christ without being overbearing. Treat the speaker as you would want to be treated, giving at least a love offering or generous honorarium, and reimburse them for all expenses. Use references and personal referrals from those who have conducted game dinners when considering a speaker.

How will the speakers respond to the questions addressed above? Will they agree with the opinions expressed, and the recommendations made by the pastors? Or will they have different views? Consideration will now turn to their responses.

As to the focus and subject of the event, the speakers responded with hunting as the main subject. Only one said “other.” As to whether the speaker should be a pastor, the majority opinion was “no” coming in with the weight of seventy-seven percent of the total. They were unanimous in recommending a speaker be a believer. They were also unanimous in stating that the speaker should present the Gospel. Follow up on this question showed all but one stated that they always presented the Gospel. One speaker responded that they did not always do so. They could have chosen to respond with “sometimes” but none did. This indicates that the speakers, too, are focused on the
purpose of evangelism. When asked if they are comfortable in presenting the Gospel, all responded in the affirmative.

Speaker comments add valuable insight to these issues.

“The speaker needs to be competent as an outdoorsman. The credibility he has as a man and an outdoorsman directly relate to his credibility as a presenter of the Gospel in the minds of the unsaved listener – he needs to be highly competent but humble.”

“I require travel expenses, lodging if needed, and honorarium.”

“We have a web site, brochures, and email lists.”

“I normally desire that the pastor or leader of the event direct individuals to fill out the card. I think it works best if the speaker gives the invitation.”

Four of the speakers require a fee, with two requiring reimbursement of expenses in addition to the fee. Two others require expense reimbursement and an honorarium. The remaining speakers rely on honorariums only. An optional question asked them to name the amount required. Four responses were given. One said he varied the fee depending upon the church size. The others gave five hundred dollars, five hundred ninety five dollars, and the final a range of seven hundred to one thousand dollars. Some of these speakers make their lively hood from these or related ministries, so one expects these or higher fees.

Where and how do the speakers promote or advertise their ministries? Four choices were given, those being recommendation, web search, printed materials, and other. Nearly half, forty-six percent, rely on personal recommendations. Twenty-three percent of the speakers primarily utilize printed materials, fifteen percent look to the World Wide Web, and eight percent use other means to make their services known.

What are the conclusions regarding speakers from both groups of respondents? Both groups reach the same general conclusions. Use a speaker other than a pastor.
Make sure the speaker presents the Gospel. Focus on hunting for the largest draw. Expect to remunerate speakers generously with an honorarium or required fee, and reimburse them for all expenses incurred. Make sure this item is adequately cared for in the planning of the event and specifics are contracted in advance.

Finally, the speaker chosen will impact the effectiveness of the event, so choose him carefully. Word of mouth conversations from those who have used his services are valuable sources of information. Make sure he can clearly present the Gospel and encourage people to decisions for the Lord in an effective manner.

The Draw of the Event

What makes these events so popular? Experience and research reveal the huge attendances, year after year, that are attested by some churches. This is a valuable lesson for us to learn and a practical consideration. If properly planned and performed un-churched people and believers will attend these events.

For the speakers, the first two questions asked focused upon the nature of the event, whether hunting, fishing, or some other event was planned. The overwhelming response recommended hunting as we saw earlier. It is interesting to note that other was mentioned some, but fishing was not. The culture in parts of the country emphasizes fishing in a huge way, but that was not the focus of our responses. Sixty-nine percent responded that deer hunting was the best type of hunting to present. Wild turkeys as the focus of the event were second at thirty-eight percent. Waterfowl had only one response.

Should competition be involved in some way at a game dinner? Thirty-one percent said yes, but the majority of sixty-nine percent said that it should not be used.
There may be some exception where a bow or skeet shooting event could be employed, but these may better be made use of at the rendezvous mentioned earlier.

The final section focused on door prizes. Are door prizes a part of the draw, and how important are they? Some call these “give-aways” instead of door prizes. Only eight percent said no, the overwhelming majority said “yes!” This response came in at ninety-two percent of those polled. When asked how important door prizes were, fifty-four percent responded that they were moderately important, and thirty-eight percent said they were of high importance. This reveals the importance of planning some or a number of give-aways for a game dinner. The following comments help understand this factor.

“Impresses guests – gives the events value in the minds of visitors – keeps them for the whole event.”

“It depends on the area.”

Door prizes keep the audience present throughout the entire program and allow for decision cards to be utilized. It also communicates that Christians aren’t just looking to shove something at the audience, but are willing to freely give materially with no strings attached.”

“I don’t know if guys come for the drawings, but it adds a special dimension and indicates that sponsors take the group/program seriously.”

“People like free stuff.”

“I believe people come to learn outdoor skills more than for the door prizes.”

“We don’t make our events competitive. We fish, fly fish and pheasant hunt. We do bicycling events also.”

Will our pastors agree with the recommendations and observations of the speakers? How will they answer these questions? How diverse will be the opinions presented? Consider these questions and the answers to them below.

Asked “What attracted people to come?” the pastors agreed that hunting skills were the major draw. Fishing skill development came in at only twenty-five percent of
the answers. Whitetail Deer was the primary object of these skill seminars grabbing sixty-six percent of the responses. Forty-seven percent of those reflecting fishing as the main subject chosen also added deer as a second choice. Of those responding with deer as the main focus, fourteen percent said waterfowl was a major topic. A minority of those recommending hunting also included fishing as a draw. They were equally divided on whether trout or bass should be the focus of the event if fishing were chosen.

The pastors who chose only fishing as the draw for their events recommended trout as the subject twenty-nine percent to bass that came in at seventy-one percent. The area of the country must affect this recommendation as some areas have low availability of trout. Salmon was offered as a choice, but no one chose it. Yet people around the Great Lakes know the draw that salmon fishing has, and this popularity is targeted with great results. Being wise to the demographic of one’s own region is essential to success as the draw is considered.

One-third of the pastors responding included competition of some kind in their event. The other two-thirds did not. The practice and wisdom seems to be to reserve the competition style events for a different venue. The game dinner seems to be the wrong place to involve competitive events. Further light is given to this subject as one peruses the verbal responses furnished by the pastors.

“We have never been specific. We try to appeal to the sportsman in general. Some of our speakers have been specific but the invitation is general. The specific that has the most enthusiasts is deer hunting, so regardless of the speaker’s interest we always recognize all the areas.”

“People came for the food and to hear a professional bass fisherman. We also had a professional football player speak once. We know good speakers are a key. We had one speaker who turned people off because he didn’t take time to relate to them and share his experience as a professional fisherman before going into a confrontational message.”
“Competition is not necessary, but I know churches that do and it adds to the attraction.”

“We used a cooking contest with wild game.”

“Many men will come for food and seminars on hunting/fishing topics if the presenters are experts and the food is good.”

The issue of door prizes is included in this section concerning the draw of the event. Eighty-six percent of the pastors utilized door prizes. The balance did not. When asked “Are door prizes important?” the response in favor of door prizes went up to ninety percent. The conclusion is that door prizes of some kind are important! They not only add to the appeal of the event, but the verbal responses given below will illuminate other influence on the success and the draw of the event.

“I feel that door prizes gave an added ‘excitement’ to the evening. It also gave an opportunity for contact with local businessmen and to explain what we were doing.”

“Door prizes have been important in that people register their decision on the card used for the door prizes. It pretty much guarantees the audience will not leave prior to filling out the commitment card we have provided.”

“We always plan for a large Grand drawing gift, plus gifts for teens and children.”

“Use door prizes to hold people until the end of the program and to bring them back next year.”

“We use door prizes as a bridge only, to have some fun and as a connection tool. We do not advertise that we will be having door prizes, so they are not a false incentive for coming.”

“We used small door prizes related to deer or turkey hunting.”

“I feel door prizes are a draw to give the unsaved a reason to come. It is something for free possibly. It also provides a challenge to other vendors to donate.”

“We had many local businesses donate gifts and prizes. That helps with the expense and the coverage.”

“Prizes were not that expensive but were the driver for competition.”

“Prizes are limited, because most of these guys already have their toys of choice.”
“Hundreds of door prizes.”[sic]

“We try to imitate other non-church events as much as possible. For example, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and similar events have door prizes. So do we.”

The conclusion of both groups is that door prizes are essential to success of a game dinner. The use accomplishes several practical purposes in addition to bringing people to the event. Hunting themes and door prizes are effective aspects of game dinners for the purpose of evangelism.

Use of Food

How important is having food at these events? It would seem a parody to call them game dinners without serving a meal. Would it be possible to host a successful event without food being served? This would make such events far easier to conduct, and much less expensive. Is it necessary to use food in an event? The answer is yes!

Let’s consider the pastor’s responses first. Only six percent responded that they did not. That leaves a whopping ninety-four percent responding that they did use food. Asked “How important is the use of food to the success of the event?” the responses were very interesting. Eight percent answered that it was of slight importance, fourteen percent said food was moderately important, and seventy-eight percent said the use of food in promoting the success of the event was of high importance. Whether the meal was catered or a carry in was nearly evenly divided. Forty-four percent used a catered meal, and fifty-six percent used a carry in or covered dish style dinner. Asked about whether wild game was included in the meal, sixty-four percent responded with yes, and thirty-six percent responded with no.

A follow up question asked about the importance of using wild game. Is the use of it important in such events? The answers came back with twenty-three percent saying
it did not matter; sixty-one percent said it was good to use, and the rest did not respond to the question. Health concerns are surfacing when wild game is to be used. Many states require that all food prepared and served at meals where a fee is required be government inspected and approved. Some states prohibit the use of wild game for any event like those being proposed. Know the laws of the area before committing to the use of game.

Should a complete meal be served? Or will something less accomplish the purpose well? Only six percent served some form of a snack, while ninety-four percent served a full meal. No area was allowed for individual comments on the subject of food. Some comments on other areas reflect the importance and impact food can have.

Selected comments are listed below.

“We invite our guest to bring their favorite game dish. If they have none they bring a vegetable dish or dessert. This meal has become a special highlight, with competition for the most unique dish.”

“A variety of foods (wild game and ‘normal’); people donated the food.”

“We offer a home-cooked buffet and the men rave about it each year. We have added afternoon workshop seminars for about 4 years now which adds to the interest to those coming.”

“We offered food that each guy brought. We also offered a prize for the best food. We had competition and prizes for that as well.”

“People came for the food and to hear a professional bass fisherman…Served a variety of wild game meats…Bought too much food.”

“We offer a complete wild game buffet every year, as well as a dessert buffet of homemade pies, primarily, and sides. We use cold name brand sodas, as well as bottled water, coffee, etc.”

“We had less items of wild game and more quantity as compared to our first year.”

“Many men will come for food and seminars on hunting/fishing topics if the presenters are experts and the food is good.”

The speakers’ advice taken from their responses will be considered next. These professionals have more experience in various locales than do the pastors. It will be
interesting to consider their view of the importance of food to the success and draw of such events.

“Should food be used as a part of the draw?” was the first question regarding food to be presented in the questionnaire to the speakers. One hundred percent answered yes! Asked the importance of food to the event, they answered “moderate” at the rate of thirty-eight percent and “high” at sixty-two percent. The meals served at the ministries they attended were catered twenty-three percent of the time and were carry-in, covered dish style meals seventy-seven percent of the time. Eight percent answered that game should not be used and that only a snack was served. Ninety-two percent responded that game should be used, and that the format was a full dinner. Comment space was not provided to the speakers either. The following comments applying to food were found in verbal comments in other sections of their responses.

“Do what you do with excellence.”

“Getting the meal served quickly so scores of hungry men are not left sitting at their tables watching a painfully slow process of people being served.”

The majority of the speakers had little to say about the food itself. Could the reason be that they have little input or responsibility in this arena? Since they are asked to speak at game dinners, the meal could be assumed as important to them, and hence they do not really appreciate or focus on the food.

What are the conclusions regarding food? Focus groups, testimonials, the voice of speakers, and the opinion of the pastors who responded tell us that food is extremely important to the draw and success of the game dinner. Quality food is a must. Using wild game in some manner adds to the draw of the event though local health regulations and laws must be obeyed. A carry-in meal can be as effective as a catered dinner. A carry-in dinner will save cost for the smaller churches, and provide a larger variety of
food served. Prizes can be furnished for the best wild game dish provided and may add to the draw of the event, contributing to its success.

Funding the Event

The issue of funding an event is always to be considered. It is important and can limit the event and add to its effectiveness. How should a game dinner be funded? What should the promoters expect from those who attend? Should the ones attending expect to pay an admittance fee or buy a ticket? Or should it be free to all who attend? Will the church have to shoulder all or some of the expense? Should money be budgeted for this event or other similar outreaches? Should this be considered an expense or a legitimate investment in evangelism? Can collections be received? These are practical questions that deserve consideration.

The first question dealt with admission. “Did you charge admission for the event?” was the question presented to the pastors. Sixty-one percent of the respondents said they did not charge any fee at all. Nineteen percent said they charged over ten dollars. Eight percent responded with five to ten dollars, and six percent said they charged a fee of under five dollars for the event. The opinion here suggests that no admission should be charged.

Should an offering be received? There was a strong response to this second question concerning funding. Every person who completed the form responded as to whether a collection or offering should be received. Only nineteen percent received an offering, while eighty-one percent did not. This again reflects an opinion that offerings should not be used, at least not a collection type offering. Perhaps a donation bucket at the end of the food table for those who may want to give is appropriate? Experience and
opinion of focus groups show that there are many who appreciate such events, are used to paying to attend, and wish to contribute some to the events that they attend.

The answers to the next question seem in conflict with the opinion expressed in the previous question. The question was “If you received a collection, what percent of the expenses did it cover?” The answers were disparate. Only one responding pastor said that the collection covered one hundred percent of the costs. Another pastor responded answering that one half the expense was covered by the collection. Twenty-four percent said that seventy-five percent of the costs were covered by the collection. The majority response of sixty-seven percent opined that only one-quarter of the expenses was recouped by the collection. The answers to this question impacts the next question, showing us that money must be budgeted to cover the expenses. The only exception would be to have a benefactor or a group of benefactors underwrite the event.

The last question impacts every organization that plans and performs such an event. “Did you budget money for the event?” was the question presented next. Seventy-eight percent responded that money was budgeted, and twenty-two percent said that they did not budget any funds. Some of these responses may reflect the fact that some churches do not use a budget or have a budget process. But wisdom says the cost must be considered and a way or plan be made to cover the expenses for this and every ministry. Good stewardship demands it, especially with the costs of doing everything today. The comments given on funding help us clarify the issue and consider the answers given. Perhaps there was a problem with the questionnaire here as the first response states. Take that into consideration while reading the comments in this section.

“We take no offering but the program would not submit without selecting a %.”

“We just did it with volunteers and donated food.”
“The event was viewed as an evangelistic outreach. If the collection was not enough to cover the expense of the evening (primarily the speaker), the church picked up the additional expense.”

“Church paid for the event.”

“We take an offering for helping to cover the expenses of the speaker, but not for the meal. This is a part of our evangelism budget. We have stated to those coming that the meal is our gift to them.”

“We budgeted six hundred dollars plus sponsors from within the church who like to give to this.”

“Take time to advertise well in your community and to sports stores. Get to know them.”

“In New York you can not charge for a wild game dinner, but you can charge for the speaker.”

“We always had a free evening, and just required a ticket for the meal, just for preparation purposes. We used to take an offering, and the reason was some attendees could not believe that we could offer such a fine evening at no charge. We have chosen to do away with the offerings about four years ago, as we felt strongly about the outreach potential, and did not want any negative feedback along the lines of, ‘Oh great, I knew they would be after money.’ We offer a completely free evening, and we are completely clear and forthright with the Gospel as well.”

“The first attempt was un-budgeted but success of the event brought minimal funding.”

“The goal is to get sponsors to care for certain expenses.”

“It was paid for by a silent auction and by charging exhibitors for booths.”

“The event pretty much paid for itself, but was underwritten by our church.”

“It was part of the men’s ministry budget.”

“Our church figured how much it would cost and set aside money in a fund to cover it. It is important to let folks know in advance so they are not surprised. Our events cost twenty-two hundred dollars each.”

“RBC’s event is self supporting. We bring in enough from the event to fund the event. I also believe more unsaved people will come to the event if they are asked to pay. People tend to shy away from free events at churches because they think they are going to be Bible thumped.”
“We fund the total event as a testimony of grace to our guests. They may not understand God’s grace in salvation, but they understand a fun event that’s free. We can use that as a basis for talking about God’s free gift to them of Jesus Christ’s death for their sins.”

The answers to the consideration of money or funding have a wide variety of opinion! There is no surprise here. It will be interesting to add and consider the advice and opinions of the speakers as they consider the same subject.

Just over half of the speakers answered that the events they participate in have no charge for the event. Fifteen percent responded that their events charge over ten dollars for admission. Just under one quarter, twenty-three percent responded that their events charged five to ten dollars. And only eight percent responded that the admission fee was less than five dollars. Again, a diverse opinion is shown in these responses, just as from the previous group.

Asked about receiving a collection, over seventy percent said it should not be done. Just fewer than thirty percent said it should be. This seems a significant division of attitude toward the source of funding for these events.

A diverse range of answers was given on the percentage of cost that could be covered by a collection. The answers here run the complete gamut of responses that were offered. It seems that there is no clear opinion on this matter from our professionals.

Where there was unanimity was in the question about budgeting. The question was “Should money be budgeted for such events?” And the answer was one hundred percent “yes.” The verbal responses show diversity of opinions on this subject, but are helpful in consideration of the issue for one’s own ministry event.

“We do not charge for any of our events. We do take a free will offering. The Gospel should always be free.”
“I think to answer these above questions correctly you would need to be more specific on the size of the audience, cost of the meal, and etc. If a church budgets money for the event, then less money can be asked for from attendees.”

“I marked this twenty-five percent because I couldn’t leave this blank and submit the survey, but I don’t think an offering should be taken in the format that we use. My only experience is within the context of my local church and I feel the church should subsidize the event so that no admission fees are necessary.”

“By charging you cause attendees to commit to coming.”

“Funding for these workshops comes from our organization’s general fund, and from grants specifically targeted for the shooting sports.”

“People enjoy contributing to something that brings them value.”

A wide variety of opinion is expressed. Like many things, this matter needs to be a matter of personal choice decided by each church or ministry. The best wisdom from both groups suggests one should budget the money to cover the expenses of the event, and to make it a free ministry if at all possible. It should be considered an investment in reaching the unsaved, and God was willing to invest his best, his Son, Jesus Christ for them. We can surely find the resources to publicize truth to these people who may not be reachable by any other means.

**Defining Success**

Everyone loves a winner. These words are universal in acceptance in practical matters as well as in sports. How is success in evangelism and discipleship measured? Experience shows that things which may have seemed unsuccessful at the time are later shown to have been highly effective. Most ministers feel that they have bombed on a sermon, but they go ahead and give an invitation and see someone respond to the message and make a decision for Christ. This is because ministry to the soul of a person is hard to discern and recognize, especially short term. What measures the success of a game dinner, a rendezvous, or of a challenge?
The speakers will have first chance to give their opinions and ideas as to success for these events. The main focus of the questionnaire was applicable to game dinners. But we will allow them to guide us into this subject. Their opinion carries weight, as most speak at numerous events per year, and the pastors who later respond to similar questions conduct one major event per year.

Two questions that drive to the heart of success are considered. First asked was to rate the effectiveness of game dinners for evangelism. The response was strong in rating it as “high” with a response of sixty-nine percent. The answer that it was of “moderate” success was next with twenty-three percent. And eight percent answered that it was of “slight” effectiveness.

Next asked was to rate the game dinner’s effectiveness for the purpose of discipleship. The response was less positive with the answer “slight” becoming the majority answer, weighing in with forty-six percent of the votes. The opinion that it deserved a “high” rating was second carrying thirty-one percent of the vote. “Moderate” in effectiveness came in last with twenty-three percent. The conclusion is that the game dinner should focus on evangelism, not discipleship. Some make discipleship decisions at game dinners, renewing their commitment to grow in Christ. Some outdoorsmen just fall away, and such events can refocus their priorities and renew their commitment. In this sense, discipleship decisions are made at game dinners. But to conduct a game dinner for only discipleship purposes is not recommended.

Asked for comments on the above, the response was low. But those who did mentioned fellowship, growing friendships, and exposing unbelievers to the Gospel as purposes they thought were appropriate for game dinners. The purpose for a particular
event could change from year to year, but defining it as one or another seems important so one can focus on that target and be most effective. Game dinners are best used for evangelism although life altering recommitments to Christ may occur.

Does attendance alone define success? If the numbers attending game dinners reveals success, then success is painted in positive terms and in bright colors! The options given to those speakers taking the survey were varied. Four hundred to five hundred in attendance was the most frequent response coming in at forty-six percent. Next in frequency was the answer of two hundred to three hundred, garnering thirty-one percent of the votes. Eight percent answered with each of the other choices which were one hundred, seven hundred fifty to one thousand, and one thousand plus. Testimonials presented during research revealed some ministries having seven hundred plus for three consecutive nights in order to accommodate the demand for tickets to their event.

Frequently events held the first time realized over a thousand in attendance.

Asked if they would continue to minister at these events, the answer was “yes” from all the responding speakers. A follow-up question was asked concerning how often they would recommend conducting such events, ninety-two percent responded annually. The remaining eight percent said bi-annually. Asked if they would recommend these events for ministry by others, they responded ninety-two percent to eight percent that they recommended highly as opposed to moderately. All said that people accepted Christ at their events, and the number of responses was widely diverse. One answer was “three to four annually,” another said “ten percent of those attending trusted Christ,” another responded “Sixty in the past three seminars alone,” and one responded “often dozens.” All said they expect some other decisions to be made for the Lord rather than conversion.
Most responded that “Christian life” type decisions were expected. One speaker responded that he expected people to commit to membership in the church where the event was held. Seventy-seven percent used cards for the decisions process, and the balance relied upon a show of hands type commitment or invitation.

Are the speakers comfortable in presenting the Gospel? All responded that they were comfortable in presenting the Gospel. None preferred that someone else present the Gospel after they presented their testimony and the Gospel. Focus groups and experience show that some speakers are not as clear as they could be in presenting the Gospel. This is a skill that could be improved if they desired to do so. The invitation process is an area where some responding to the invitation get confused. Times of decision and commitment need to be carefully planned and conducted, as the decision for Christ is the desired goal. This focal point of the event should not be overlooked, but be very carefully considered and planned.

Focus groups reveal that follow-up is often a weakness for a game dinner. This is especially true if there is more than one church involved in the presentation of the event. Since discipleship is one emphasis of this research and the recommendations based upon it, this issue was addressed in the questions. Sixty-nine percent responded that they were able to follow up with those who made decisions for the Lord in some way. Of the ones who said “yes” to the question of following up, all but one said they followed up personally, and the one diverse answer listed the phone as the means of contact and follow-up. Those who responded “no” recommended email, letters, and literature for this purpose. Only twenty-three percent of this group listed on-going follow-up as a high probability. One respondent answered that they could not maintain follow up at all.
Fifteen percent responded that there was a slight ability to continue follow-up, and the balance reported moderate success.

Perhaps the most telling question is the last in this subheading to be considered. The speakers were asked “Has your churches/organizations grown as a result of this ministry?” The intent of the question was to discern whether a church could expect growth if they performed such an event. The speakers responded ninety-two percent to eight percent that the churches they served had experienced growth as a result of their program or event. Those who responded that no growth was forthcoming also indicated that there were no follow-up attempts and no ongoing attempts to maintain contact with those who responded. This would seem to be a reasonable consequence of a lack of follow-up in that there is no growth in a church that does not at least attempt to follow-up and maintain contact with those who make decisions in the various programs of outreach in a church. Discipleship is an essential goal to complete evangelistic effort. As Jesus said, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you…” Mt 28:19-20 NLT

The conclusion of the speakers is that game dinners are recommended, that people do receive Christ as Savior and Lord, and that with some of those making decisions ongoing contact may be maintained for the purpose of discipleship. Those who receive Christ and move on to discipleship will see the importance of the Church in the Lord’s plan for their lives. As they continue to grow some will become members of that church which conducted the event. The churches that host these events grow as a result of the efforts invested in game dinners. One pastor reports that they had four new families
come into the church in a three week time span after conducting their first game dinner. An additional benefit is that people do respond with other Christian Life decisions. Game dinners should be conducted every year, rather than every other year.

Pastors often view results and success differently than others. The data returned from their questionnaire will address similar if not the same issues. Yet some of the questions were slightly different due to those who were being asked. Lessons can be learned to apply, and the researcher expects that the speakers and pastors will reach similar conclusions, if not exactly the same.

“Did this event accomplish your purposes?” was the first question asked in this sub heading of the questionnaire. It is significant for fifty-eight percent of these pastors to say the event success was “high!” The other forty-two percent all responded that the success was “moderate.” Most significant to the current research is that none said the success was “slight” when they evaluated their event. Everyone responding to this question reported that their event was successful. The real import of this response shows that churches and organizations who attempt new ministries should consider labeling them as experiments. The expectation would be that some ministry attempts will not succeed and will need to be eliminated from further consideration. Depending on the locale of the church, game dinners can be recommended with a success rate that makes them more than an experiment!

Though numbers are not the only measure of success they are important. In the Bible we see the book of Acts mentioning time and again the response to the Gospel and the growth of the early church by the use of words that indicate numerical growth. Some passages state clearly the numbers that were added, so numbers attending is a legitimate
measure of success. “But God’s Good News was spreading rapidly, and there were many new believers.” Acts 12:24 NLT The Bible uses numbers of people to define success.

A majority of the pastors, forty two percent, reported one hundred people attended their event. This would be a success to most churches because a lot of churches do not average that number in attendance on Sunday mornings! Seventeen percent responded that two to three hundred attended, and the same number represented those that saw four to five hundred participate. Six percent of the churches saw five hundred to seven hundred attend their event. Eight percent saw seven hundred fifty to one thousand enjoy the event. And six percent saw crowds exceed one thousand! Assuming some of those attending did not know Christ, the Gospel was sown in the lives of their guests at game dinners in numbers rarely experienced. These numbers of participants show this method of outreach has a strong desire and is highly effective in drawing people. One goal of the research was to ask the question if hunting and fishing could be used as means of evangelism. The answer from the results is an overwhelming “Yes!”

The pastors said the event should be held annually rather than bi-annually by a margin of eighty-six percent to fourteen percent. None answered with the response “never.” Asked if they would recommend others to perform such an event, they responded with twenty-five percent recommending it moderately, seventy-five percent recommending it highly, and none responded that they only recommended it slightly.

Asked if people were saved at their event, seventy-two percent said that they were. Twenty-eight percent said “no” to this question. Asked to reveal the numbers of those that were saved, if they reported that some were saved, the following responses were given. Three responded there were five or six that were saved. Other responses
were “One conversion and nine recommitments,” “Ten percent of those in attendance,” “Twenty to thirty,” “Twenty-nine this year,” “Twenty plus,” and one report was “Sixty-eight.” These are important numbers, as they represent souls that will spend eternity with the Lord rather than separated from him in Hell. Further significance is given to the numbers when some churches are reporting no conversions in most calendar years!

Of other value, the pastors expected and experienced other types of Christian Life or discipleship decisions. In dealing with the decisions, most pastors used cards to record responses. About nine percent provided a separate area where the seeker could go to receive further counsel and help.

When asked about follow-up, only six percent of the pastors responded that they were not able to follow-up with those responding to the invitation. The remainder used a variety of means to initiate follow-up. Using personal contacts and letters captured the most choices; each being used thirty-three percent of the time. Literature came next, used by fourteen percent as the choice for the first contact. The phone was utilized by eleven percent of the pastors for the follow-up contact. Only three percent chose to use an email for this contact. A review of the responses and the results regarding maintaining on-going contact did not discern any significant pattern when comparing the method of initial contact to the results that applied to the success of maintaining this initial contact. There would be variables, probably as many variables as there are pastors in the manner in which these contacts were used. That may account for the varied responses.

Further consideration of the pastor’s ability to maintain on-going contact or follow-up needs more consideration because they revealed mixed results. Forty-two percent report moderate success in on-going follow-up; while thirty-one percent report
only slight success in this important issue. It is good to note that twenty-two percent report high success with on-going relationships. Three percent responded with a “no” answer.

The results from the speaker’s survey were dissimilar from the pastors regarding the success of the event as it impacted church growth through additions. Seventy-two percent of the pastors report growth as a result of this ministry. Twenty-eight percent report no growth. Could the expectations for the event impact this number? Some pastors said earlier in the questionnaire that they expected the event to be a sowing, or a watering of the Gospel, rather than a time of harvesting of souls. That would be a consideration for another research project, but it would seem to be a logical conclusion. Often what we expect and pray for is what the Lord gives or allows to happen. We should expect souls to be saved and to be added to our church through using game dinners and other events focusing on hunting and fishing.

The final verdict of both pastors and speakers is that these methods work. People are saved, and people make decisions that enable discipleship. Though the methods are different from church to church, and person to person, the Lord is using these means to reach people. It comes highly recommended as an effective tool for evangelism, discipleship, and for the making of decisions that lead to deeper spiritual growth. Using game dinners which focus on hunting and fishing is effective and successful in evangelism and discipleship. The research validates the purposes of both evangelism and discipleship.
Final Comments on Successes and Mistakes

Many of the written responses gathered early in the questionnaire were extremely helpful. The survey was not intended to be inclusive of all issues and considerations of this important ministry effort. The final section of the feedback poll was to allow respondents to share what worked well, what mistakes were made, and what they might do differently the next time they conducted a game dinner. The advice from both pastors and speakers has been compiled in Appendix G. All the responses from those completing the questionnaires may not be included, especially if another has shared the same advice.

**Important Lessons from the Research**

Pastoral commitment and leadership for such events is absolutely essential to the successful completion of outdoor ministries. Without the pastor’s enthusiastic support the ministry will likely fall flat. A pastor may delegate the majority of the work but without his leadership and support the ministry will likely not succeed. If delegating the organization of an event is necessary, the one who organizes it must be enthusiastic as well as the one who delegates.

**Timing**

The time the game dinner is planned and conducted is critical to success. Not only is the time of day important, but so is the day of the week. Timing is critical as it relates to upcoming hunting or fishing seasons, local events, holidays, school calendars, and many other factors. Intentionally avoid conflicts that will give potential attendees a reason to choose something else to do. The research shows that a Saturday is most desired during the winter months for a successful event.
Purpose

Conducting a game dinner without first formulating a clear and concise purpose statement is like flock-shooting wild ducks. Flock shooting usually means misses or wounded birds. Most game dinners purpose to spread the Gospel; while discipleship efforts can be more effective through a rendezvous or challenge event. Write down a concise, clear, and transferable statement of purpose before planning an event.

Location

The researcher expected to hear that a neutral site was much more effective than a church facility. However, the research did not verify that assumption. To host an event in a neutral site may have some advantages in reaching some un-churched, but wherever the event may be held, it can be effective in reaching outdoor enthusiasts with the Gospel of Christ. Use the best site available that meets the needs of the event.

Speaker

Choosing the speaker is a critical decision, so it should be done carefully. Those with major reputations can be a big draw to an event, but careful screening of potential speakers and clear communication with all involved is essential. Use a written contract when committing to a speaker. Word of mouth referrals from a person that is known and trusted is sound advice. The speakers believe they are very competent in presenting the Gospel and bringing people to commitment to Christ. This perception is not always shared by the pastors who host such events. Make sure the method of invitation and who is to do it are clarified before any commitments are made or a contract is signed with a speaker. Paying a speaker can be the most costly of all items at a game dinner, so honorarium and travel expenses should be budgeted in anticipation.
The research results concluded that currently hunting is the most recommended focus of game dinners. Subjects related to hunting may be used, but the more specific the subject matter, the less it appeals to the larger potential audience. Other local pursuits could be targeted, and should be if the attraction is really large. For instance, in Western Pennsylvania the opening of trout season in the spring brings many to a fevered pitch. Many experience the same reaction in Michigan as salmon season approaches. Door prizes add to the draw of the event and should be used. Manufacturers and retail stores may supply some items as giveaways as means of advertisement.

Food

People like to eat. Eating is more than just consuming of food for existence and strength; it is a social time. Barriers come down, and sharing occurs in ways not achievable by other means. Therefore, food and beverage are essential to the success of an event. Advice from those hosting game dinners and other sports-focused outreach programs emphasize the crucial nature of using food to promote the success of the events. It is wise to use wild game if local restrictions and laws allow it. But the use of wild game is not essential to the success of an event. Carry in dinners work just as well, if not better, than catered meals, and would certainly be more cost effective.

Funding the Event

Churches should expect to pay the majority of the cost, if not all of it. Some strongly recommend that the event should be free. Using a collection works for some, but it may not be wise for all. Using tickets for planning and covering the cost is effective for many, especially for cooperative efforts between churches. Donors may
cover some of the costs associated with these events if specific costs are clearly defined and the request is made for this specific item. The souls of people are worth it. Expenses for such events are legitimate investments in evangelism, not just another line item expense in the church budget. Consider the local ramifications before making the plans for funding, but plan for them, and if possible budget these costs into the evangelism budget of the church.

Success

The perception of success usually depends on the purpose defined. If presenting people with the Gospel is the purpose, then seeing people respond by receiving the Gospel should be the ultimate validation of success. A full house would show success, especially if many are un-churched people. The game dinner’s ultimate success may come later, after relationships based upon trust are developed. To expect large numbers saved the first time a game dinner is conducted is unrealistic and short sighted. The real consideration should be the presentation and cultivation of the Gospel in the lives of people. To have lives changed by people receiving Christ as personal Savior and Lord is the ultimate goal and measure of success.

Conclusion

Hunting and fishing are legitimate means for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship. The consideration of Bible truth, the practicality of hunting, and the conducted research all say that hunting is being used in powerful ways to promote these two ends. Those who desire to use hunting and fishing for evangelism are on target. These subjects do promote great interest and participation from outdoor enthusiasts. Un-churched people do attend these events. Though methods always change in reaching
others, the methods of focus for this project are practical and should be utilized in these times. They are legitimate means to evangelism and discipleship.
This chapter focuses on the practical application of what has been learned through the previous chapters. The immediate goal is the evangelism and discipleship of hunters and fishermen through planning and conducting wild game dinners, rendezvous, and challenges. Further details in the differences between these events will be given in their respective sections which follow in this chapter. The quest of this chapter is to formulate and present a simple, practical format which will expedite planning so that churches and organizations can practically perform the many areas and details which define success.

An additional purpose is to present a format for planning that is usable if the draw of the event might be changed. For instance, a church may desire to use the challenge in the form of a golf tournament. The research shows that other recreation or sports may be used for evangelism and discipleship in this contemporary culture. The draw in a particular area of the country will differ from that in another part of the country. It might change from hunting to a golf outing or from a fishing challenge to a horseshoe pitching contest. The planning for such events remains basically the same.

The instrument of this research was a questionnaire that dealt with crucial areas necessary to success for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship. The seven vital areas addressed were the purpose, the timing, the location, the speaker, the use of food, the funding, and finally how to define the success of the event. Each of these areas will be addressed in the recommendations below and will need to be individually tailored for specific events.
Following this guideline will help achieve success. It is practical, easy to use, yet may be detailed. There is a logical reason for the order as it flows from point to point. Questions will be asked to the planners. When these questions are answered, much of the event is planned! If a question does not apply, simply skip it, or eliminate it from the document being tailored to the use of event being planned. The final step is performing the event, and part of that step is evaluation.

Purpose it. Define the main purpose in one sentence.

Picture it. Describe what you want to see at the event.

Plan it. Determine the steps and practical choices needed.

Process it. Delegate in order to receive the wisdom and partnership of others.

Pray for it. Develop a prayer team for requisitioning God’s power and blessing.

Perform it. Do it to make it a reality

**Conducting an Outdoor Event**

The method for conducting an event for evangelism and discipleship will differ slightly based on whether a game dinner is chosen, or whether one chooses the rendezvous, or the challenge format. A game dinner will be the largest and most involved of the three events which a church might conduct, but all of these events will generate contacts which should be followed up. Reflecting on the research, ninety-two percent of the speakers and seventy-two percent of the pastors who responded said that churches grow as a result of conducting these outreaches. God is blessing these events, so let us learn how to effectively plan them. Remember too, that God might use for His purposes something done imperfectly better than nothing done at all!
Purpose It

Define the main purpose, and state it in one sentence. Remember that a quality purpose statement must be clear, concise, and communicable. This allows understanding and promotes the participation of those who will help achieve the goals of the event. Once the purpose is determined and stated, the development of other necessary plans may move ahead. A clear purpose statement is crucial, as it identifies the target that is sought. It allows choices to be made, determining what will be done, and what will not.

The following questions will help in authoring a purpose statement. Is the desire to see people saved the day of the event? Is the purpose to empower and enable your people to bring their friends and relatives? Is the purpose pre-evangelism? Pre-evangelism is defined as planting or watering the Word of God. After the seed of the Word is sown into a life, it is nurtured by on-going relationships and by further ministry of God’s Word. This step is at times shared by different people. Finally in culmination, the Holy Spirit brings the person to believe in Christ. An important purpose of pre-evangelism can be to establish or build upon a relationship by continuing contact with people.

Our targeted outdoor person is often highly self sufficient and self reliant. He or she enjoys being alone. Distrust of others, especially those who are pushy and who come on too strongly is a given trait. Reaching him requires meeting him where he is and demonstrating the reality of your friendship. He wants to see proof that you are without self serving motives and that you really are seeking his benefit. This usually is a process and usually does not often occur in one event or in a brief period of time.
Some sample purpose statements follow. “Our purpose is to conduct a game dinner in order to allow our own members to bring their friends to hear the Gospel.” “To conduct a fun evening focused on fishing to establish new contacts within our community is our purpose for the event.” “To present a seminar focused on wild turkey hunting using a game dinner as the draw to bring in un-churched people is our purpose.”

Picture It

Describe what you want to see at the event. How do you want it to look? Write down details. This is a great place to brainstorm and share some of the excitement with others. Describe how the meeting hall will look. Draw a picture or diagram if necessary. Think about how the tables might be arranged. Should people bring mounts of deer, turkey, fish and other game to attract attention?

What colors will you use to decorate? Maybe some pop up blinds will be used? What about large pictures of animals in the wild? Will an outdoor scene be erected or simulated? If so what will that look like?

Who will come? Friends? Families? Will boys and girls be there with dad alone, or will whole families be present? Mentally describe a vision of what you want the event to accomplish. Picture how guests may react to what they see.

Will seminars be presented? What seminars will you present? Will the presenters be from your locale? Will you need to find presenters and vendors? How many vendors? What type of products will be allowed? What will not be allowed? Where will the displays sit?
Will you use a brochure? What about tickets? Will posters be used? What will the posters look like? Will the staff dress in camouflage? Will the fellowship hall be used? Will the lighting be adequate?

In this area, the more specific, the better. Ideas can be considered, discarded, or developed. This would be a good place to brainstorm with others to evaluate and define the event. This stage of planning will help determine what you do and what you will not do in the following steps.

Plan It

Determine the steps and practical choices needed; this is essential to the success of your event. The more detailed the answers in this section, the more smoothly your event will run, at least to a point. These questions are critical as the little things often are overlooked. Too many overlooked small details can cause failure or limit the effectiveness of the event.

The outline given in Appendix H, addresses many areas of detailed planning in a who, what, where, when, how format. The questions in the outline decide and detail the impact of the event. If these steps are taken, the final result will be a viable plan to enjoy a successful event.

Process It

Delegate in order to receive the wisdom and partnership of others. Events of this magnitude cannot be conducted alone. Others will necessarily be involved. That is one reason why the purpose must be clearly stated. If a local church pastor has this vision, he must share it with the leadership of the church. He must let his vision be known, and then he must allow time for those leaders to process the recommendation. If the event is
to be a victory for the church, that victory must be shared with all. A wise person will never skip, short circuit or rush this step of processing the event.

Brain-storming enables church members who come up with ideas to become emotionally committed to the event as they see their ideas developed and approved. Often these people will provide network opportunities with others who share the passion for the event or will have access to resources that are valuable to the event. Wise planners allow time and involve many people in this step. “Without wise leadership, a nation falls; with many counselors, there is safety.” Prv 11:14 NLT

Pray For It

Develop a prayer team for requisitioning God’s power and blessing. If this effort is for the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom in this world, then prayer is absolutely necessary. In fact, it could legitimately be first on this list and should be priority-wise. Many of the responders mentioned that prayer must be invested early and continually. Spiritual warfare is a reality. Satan does not give up his ground or his subjects willingly. Effective, on-going prayer must surround these events. The purpose of the event must be birthed of prayer. The picture or the vision must come of prayer. Prayer allows God’s Holy Spirit to paint the canvas of the submissive mind. The snapshot of the event must be edited, amended, resized, renewed, and verified by the Word of God as prayer is vested in the event.

Perform It

Do it to make it a reality. The activity is often intense these last few days. The runners approach the starting line with excitement and with nervous energy.
anxiously awaits the starter’s pistol. It’s crunch time! It is departure day. The race begins!

The last days before a game dinner are pressure packed, requiring last minute coordination and tailoring. Adjustments must be made to the plan if necessary. People become ill, or are involved in an accident. Some back out because they cannot handle the pressure. But this time is like the beginning of planting season in the Midwest. It is the reason for all that has been invested. What happens next will validate the effort, or be relegated to the files of “What can we learn for the next one?”

This level of the event demands flexibility. The delegation of a variety of details must be known to all. Someone must be in charge. Preparation must be made for conflict. Mistakes must be overcome, and issues must be settled.

Communication capability is a valuable tool at this stage. Utilize two-way radios or perhaps cell phones. It is essential to maintain contact for organization of the event. Also, have a group of people there just to handle the intangibles and the unanticipated problems. The youth of the church can be extremely valuable in this role.

The picture, the purpose, the process, the plan, and the prayer will now become evident and valuable as the doing, the performing, takes place. The guests will be here soon! The house must be in order!

Be sure to take notes. Write them down or record them in some way for evaluation. It is essential to know what was done well and what was done poorly. At this time, what we can do better at future events jumps out, and each item must be documented.
Conducting a Game Dinner

Game dinners require the most intense and involved planning. It is usually recommended that it be a once a year event. Conducting this event more than annually will strap the resources of most churches. The contacts generated can easily and naturally lead the participants to involvement in the rendezvous and challenge events described below. Each event supports the others in the effort of evangelism.

Conducting Rendezvous Events

The term rendezvous as applied to this type event is unique in its use to this author at the time of writing. A history of the rendezvous is interesting, as it involved the frontiersmen and the plainsmen of by-gone days. These men hunted, explored, and paved the way for the Westward movement of American civilization on the North American Continent.

The fur trade was a strong motivator for the rendezvous of the past. History records many of these being held on a regular basis and in many places. Normally they were held near prominent geological markers for easier location by those attending. Water was near, as many of the goods offered for trade were transported by water craft, rafts, boats, and later steam driven river boats. Many times these locations became cities and towns. The trappers and hunters gathered and prepared their furs, other valuable items, and even some gold they found. They would bring these items and barter for sugar, coffee, fire arms, cloth, trinkets, and a plethora of other things. Sadly alcoholic beverages were used to ply the outdoorsmen, and many were robbed and deceived of their valuable items that were brought for trade. Though much happened that was wrong here, a major draw was the time with others. A rendezvous came to be an event where
people met and exchanged necessary things. The social aspect, in the positive way, is the focus of the use of the word for this consideration.

The rendezvous event will be less structured than a game dinner. It should be scheduled more often. In fact, the rendezvous should be scheduled several times a year. During the Fall and Winter, and perhaps in early Spring, the events should be conducted each month. The focus is on developing the relationships established at the game dinners through on-going contact in a non-threatening environment. A second major purpose could be discipleship, yet those would probably be more focused on new or growing believers, rather than the larger community. The expectation is that long term, these events will produce more fruit for Christ than any other effort.

A rendezvous event might look like this. Begin with a supper consisting of venison chili and cornbread with a cobbler dessert. Bless the food before the serving line is opened. Move to the meeting area, and introduce the topic of the day, which this day is turkey hunting. Ask how many in the room have already experienced turkey hunting success. Allow for comments and questions. Then show a video of a recorded turkey hunt from any reputable source. Follow with discussion of the viewed hunt, asking what the hunters did well, what they could have done better, and for further ideas that may help those gathered. Then briefly mention that God is the creator who made all things so that we might enjoy them. Explain that God loves each of us and desires to be involved in all we do. Offer to discuss further anything which might help any who might have questions regarding this love, or about God. Thank them for attending and participating. Dismiss the meeting. Don’t intentionally force the Gospel on any one. But watch to see if the
Holy Spirit is at work in any who attend. Most people can recognize the work of the
Spirit by the questions people ask or by comments that are made.

The planning of rendezvous events will be less intense than the planning of a
game dinner. Yet the same outline for planning may be used effectively. Just leave
blank those areas that do not apply. You can fast forward over them to the next
applicable topic. When complete, you will have a practical, detailed plan to engender
success!

Conducting a Challenge Event

Appendix H provides a general and flexible outline for a competition-based event.
This event will not be nearly as detailed as that of the game dinner, as was true of the
rendezvous event. These challenge events will be mainly used to make initial contacts
and start the development of the relationships needed to influence people for Christ. An
example of this event might be a fishing contest for all ages. Books, websites, and other
resources list ideas for conducting these events. A search must be done to find them, and
one goal of this effort was to collate these in a handy location and format. Check the
Works Cited page for this collation.

Challenge events may easily be tailored to other sports and activities besides
hunting or fishing. A golf outing, a hiking event, a road rally, a tractor ride, a bicycling
event, a softball tourney, and many others will work. Use the outdoor experience as a
touchstone to develop relationships of trust that enable the speaking of Christ into the
lives of people.
Summary and Conclusions

The journey is nearing completion. The problem of whether hunting and fishing may be used for evangelism and discipleship has been considered from a theoretical, a biblical, and a practical tack. The problem was presented to a number of people who have experience in using these methods for the proposed purposes. The research has been tallied, analyzed and presented. The conclusion is very clear.

Hunting and fishing may be used effectively for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship. The methods proposed in this work are better suited to evangelism, though life changing decisions may be made at these events. These decisions motivate many people forward in discipleship. Especially hunting oriented events are effective today. Three methods have been recommended and presented. These are the game dinner, the rendezvous events, and the challenge events. All could be used to form a balanced program for evangelism and discipleship.

Due to the nature of the persons we are seeking to win, immediate results should not be expected. The expectation is that one must earn the trust of the outdoorsman as a fellow before evangelism may be effective. Prayer should be invested consistently as these events are planned and conducted to reach men and women, boys and girls for Christ.
Appendix A

This email requested the completion of the questionnaire used for research in this project. It was emailed to speakers, outdoor professionals, and others who speak or minister at game dinners or other outdoor events. These were identified by personal referrals, research, and other media.

First Baptist Church

From: Jack McCullough [jmccullough@iowatelecom.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 18, 2007 4:07 PM
To: fbcmonroe@iowatelecom.net
Subject: Help on DMIN Project

September 5, 2006

Dear Friend,

This communication references a project which I am completing in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Theological Seminary. Your input will be valuable in the completing of this project.

Completion and resubmission within 7 working days is greatly appreciated.

You have been contacted because you are a leader and a pioneer in this line of outdoor ministry. You have served as a speaker or valued consultant for such events. I value your input and appreciate your help in this project.

The title of my thesis project is "Evangelism on Target: A proposal to use hunting and fishing as means to evangelism and discipleship." The plan is to formulate practical ways to utilize these and other outdoor oriented avocations for these goals. The problem under consideration is "How to use hunting and fishing as means to evangelism and discipleship." More and more opportunities present for reaching people with these activities as the initial draw.

You received this request by email. Would you assist me by completing the questionnaire below? When complete, submit it back to me. Any comments, suggestions, or recommendations will be appreciated and utilized.

The link below is for those who are speakers or involved professionally in such events.

http://monroeiowa50170.com/mccullough/speaker.htm

I prefer you complete it on line and submit it back to me as indicated. That way all information and responses can be tallied electronically. If you wish, you may print it in either format you choose, complete it, and send it back through traditional mail.

Two formats for the printing of the questionnaires are included on both links. Your email address and information will be kept in strict confidence. If you indicate the desire, I will be glad to send you a summary of my findings.

Thank you for your help and participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Jackie A McCullough

Jackie A McCullough, DMIN student at Liberty Theological Seminary Email for this research is outdoorresearch@monroeiowa50170.com
Personal email is jmccullough@iowatelecom.net
Mailing address is:
Jackie A McCullough
PO Box 280
Monroe, IA 50170

Phone 641.259.2922 office
641.259.3234 home
Appendix B

This email message was sent to Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry students and alumni. Dr. Frank Schmitt emailed this to his list of contacts at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

First Baptist Church

From: Jack McCullough [jmccullough@iowatelecom.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 18, 2007 4:13 PM
To: fbcmonroe@iowatelecom.net
Subject: Help on DMIN Project Liberty Theological Seminary Students

August 2006

To: Current Liberty Theological Seminary DMIN Students and alumni,

This communication references a research project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Theological Seminary. Your input will be valuable in the completing of this project.

The title of my thesis is “Evangelism on Target: A proposal to use hunting and fishing as means to evangelism and discipleship. The plan is to formulate practical ways to utilize these avocations, and other outdoor oriented events, for these goals. The problem under consideration is “How to use hunting and fishing as means to evangelism and discipleship.” More and more opportunities present for reaching people with these activities as the initial draw.

You received this request by email. Would you assist me by completing the questionnaire below which is appropriate? When complete, submit it back to me. Any comments, suggestions, or recommendations will by appreciated and utilized. Some of you may have promoted and spoken at such events. If you wish, you may fill out both of these questionnaires if it is appropriate. They are similar, but not identical in content.

The links to the documents are:
http://monroeiowa50170.com/mccullough/research.htm
http://monroeiowa50170.com/mccullough/speaker.htm

I prefer you complete it on line and submit it back to me as indicated. That way all information and responses can be tallied electronically. If you wish, you may print it in either format you choose, complete it, and send it back through traditional mail.

Two formats for the printing of the questionnaires are included on both links.

If you could complete and submit this within 7 working days, it would be great! Your email address and information will be kept in strict confidence. If you indicate the desire, I will be glad to send you a summary of my findings.

Thank you for your help and participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Jackie A McCullough

Jackie A McCullough, DMIN student at Liberty Theological Seminary Email for this research is outdoorresearch@monroeiowa50170.com
Personal email is jmccullough@iowatelecom.net
Mailing address is:
Jackie A McCullough
PO Box 280
Monroe, IA 50170

Phone 641.259.2922 office
641.259.3234 home
Appendix C

This email request was sent to pastors and committee chair persons who had helped to plan and perform outdoor events for outreach. The pastors included but were not limited to pastors of the GARBC and the IARBC. Other pastors who had conducted such events were referred to the author, and they were extended the opportunity to participate. A few pastors had delegated the full responsibility to a lay leader. Their opinions were deemed applicable and a few of these important people were included.

First Baptist Church

From: Jack McCullough [jmccullough@iowatelecom.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 08, 2009 4:10 PM
To: tbcmonrow@iowatelecom.net
Subject: DMIN Project Pastor's Questionnaire

August  , 2006

Dear Friend,

This communication references a project which I am completing in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Theological Seminary. Your input will be valuable in the completing of this project. If you have delegated this ministry to another, you may forward this email and have them complete and submit it. Completion and submission of it within 7 working days is greatly appreciated.

You have been contacted because you and/or your church or ministry are a leader and a pioneer in this line of outdoor ministry. You have conducted at least one event which utilized hunting, fishing, or some other outdoor focused event for outreach. I value your input and appreciate your help in this project.

The title of my thesis project is “Evangelism on Target: A proposal to use hunting and fishing as means to evangelism and discipleship.” The plan is to formulate practical ways to utilize these and other outdoor oriented activities for these goals. The problem under consideration is “How to use hunting and fishing as means to evangelism and discipleship.” More and more opportunities present for reaching people with these activities as the initial draw.

You received this request by email. Would you assist me by completing the questionnaire below? When complete, submit it back to me. Any comments, suggestions, or recommendations will be appreciated and utilized.

The link below is for individuals or organizations that have utilized outdoor events for purposes of evangelism or discipleship.

http://monroelowa50170.com/mccullough/research.htm

The second link is for those who are speakers or involved professionally in such events. Some of you may have done both. You may complete both if you desire.

http://monroelowa50170.com/mccullough/speaker.htm

I prefer you complete it on line and submit it back to me as indicated. That way all information and responses can be tallied electronically. If you wish, you may print it in either format you choose, complete it, and send it back through traditional mail. Two formats for the printing of the questionnaires are included on both links.

Your email address and information will be kept in strict confidence. If you indicate the desire, I will be glad to send you a summary of my findings.

Thank you for your help and participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Jackie A McCullough

Jackie A McCullough, DMIN student at Liberty Theological Seminary Email for this research is outdoorresearch@monroelowa50170.com

Personal email is jmccullough@iowatelecom.net

Mailing address is:
Jackie A McCullough
P.O. Box 280
Monroe, IA 50170

Phone 641.259.2822 office
641.259.3234 home
Appendix D

This online questionnaire was used with the speakers’ email in Appendix A and with the emails in Appendices B and C which were also available to both pastors and students. It was linked to PDF and Word forms that could be downloaded and completed. None of the responders used either PDF or Word format. Every responder used the HTML online form to reply.
Speaker Questionnaire

If you prefer to print and mail the questionnaire please:
download questionnaire in PDF format
or download questionnaire in Word format and mail to:

Jack McCullough
PO Box 280
Monroe, IA 50170

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. You have been identified as a leader who may use outdoor activities as means of evangelism and discipleship. Your input will be vital to my research of this problem. Mark as appropriate. Reply to any thing on additional paper if you wish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Information</th>
<th>Regarding the DRAW of your event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is completing this questionnaire?</td>
<td>What best attracts people to come?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Pastor □ Speaker □ Team leader □ Chairman</td>
<td>○ Hunting skills ○ Fishing skills ○ Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Outdoor Expert □ Other</td>
<td>What species is most effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a pastor are you one of the following?</td>
<td>□ Deer □ Turkey □ Waterfowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ LTS DMIN Graduate □ LTS DMIN Student</td>
<td>□ Salmon □ Trout □ Bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ GARBC Pastor □ Baptist Bible Fellowship</td>
<td>Should competition be involved? □ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Southern Baptist Convention</td>
<td>Should door prizes be utilized? □ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary. (Complete if you desire a copy of these findings.)</td>
<td>How important are door prizes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>○ Slight ○ Moderate ○ High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Address1:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address2:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>City:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State: Please select</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May I contact you for further input regarding your responses? □ Yes □ No

Do you desire a copy of these findings? □ Yes □ No

Who conducted this event? □ Church □ Committee
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who conducted this event?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Club □ Organization □ Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the use of FOOD at the event

Should food be used as part of the draw? □ Yes □ No

How important is the use of food to the success of the event? □ Slight □ Moderate □ High

Should the meal be?: □ Carry-in style meal? □ Catered?

Should the event utilize wild game or fish? □ Yes □ No

Which of the following should be served? □ None □ Snack □ Full meal

Regarding the FUNDING of your event

Should admission be charged for the event? □ No □ >$5 □ $5-10 □ $10+

Should a collection be received?
Outdoor Research Speaker Questionnaire

What season of the year did you conduct your event?
- Fall
- Winter
- Spring
- Summer

Do you recommend this time of year for such an event?
- Yes
- No

Did you choose this event to coincide with a particular season?
- No
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Other Specify:

What day of the week is best?
- Weekday
- Saturday
- Sunday
- Other

Why?

What time of the day is best?
- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening

Was this an all day or longer event?
- Yes
- No

What was the main purpose of the event?
- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Pre-evangelism
- Other Specify:

Comments:

Was this event successful in its purpose?
- Yes
- No

Comments:

What percent of the expenses should a collection cover?
- 25%
- 50%
- 75%
- 100%

Should money be budgeted for such events?
- Yes
- No

Comments on Funding:

Rate the success of such events.

For Evangelism
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

For Discipleship
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

For Other (Please specify:)
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

How many attend such events?
- 100
- 200-300
- 400-500
- 500-750
- 750-1000
- 1000+

Will you continue to do these events?
- Yes
- No

How often should such events be conducted?
- Annually
- Bi-annually
- Never

Do you recommend such events for ministry purposes?
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

Are people saved at your event?
- Yes
- No

If yes, how many?

What other commitments do you seek?
- Christian Life
- Membership
- Other

If you used an invitation, what format?
- Hands raised
- Card completed
- Asked people to go to a separate place

Are you comfortable in giving an invitation?
- Yes
- No

Would you prefer someone else do the invitation?
- Yes
- No

Are you able to follow up with those who made decisions?
Outdoor Research Speaker Questionnaire

Comments:

How important is the location?
○ Slight  ○ Moderate  ○ High

Regarding the SPEAKER at this event

Should the speaker be an expert in one of the following areas?
○ Hunting  ○ Fishing  ○ Other

Should the main speaker a pastor?
○ Yes  ○ No

Should the speaker a believer?
○ Yes  ○ No

Should the speaker present the gospel?
○ Yes  ○ No

Do you present the gospel when you speak at such events?
○ Always  ○ No  ○ Sometimes

Are you comfortable in presenting the gospel?
○ Yes  ○ No

What remuneration did you expect?
☐ Required Fee  ☐ Expenses
☐ Honorarium

How do you publicize your ministry?
○ Recommendation  ○ Web search  ○ Other  ○ Printed materials

If you require a set fee for speaking, how much is it? (Optional)

Comments:

○ Yes  ○ No

How do you follow up with these people?
○ Personally  ○ E-mail  ○ Letter
○ Phone call  ○ Literature furnished

Are you able to maintain contact with those who attended for future ministry?
○ No  ○ Slight  ○ Moderate  ○ High

Has your churches/organizations grown as a result of this ministry?
○ Yes  ○ No

Closing Comments

What we did well that worked:

Mistakes we made:

Things we would do next time:

Other Comments:

THANK YOU:

Submit  Reset
Appendix E

This online questionnaire was used with the pastors’ and students’ emails in Appendices B and C. It was linked to PDF and Word forms that could be downloaded and completed. None of the responders used either PDF or Word format. Every responder used the HTML online form to reply.
Outdoor Research Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. You have been identified as a leader who may use outdoor activities as means of evangelism and discipleship. Your input will be vital to my research of this problem. Mark as appropriate. Reply to any thing on additional paper if you wish.

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Pastor</td>
<td>□ Hunting skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Team member</td>
<td>□ Fishing skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Paid staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Chairman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>If a pastor are you one of the following?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization:</td>
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<td>Address1:</td>
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<td>Address2:</td>
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<td>City:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>Please select □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **May I contact you for further input regarding your responses?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |

| **Do you desire a copy of these findings?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |

| **Who conducted this event?** |
| □ Church | □ Committee |
| □ Club   | □ Organization | □ Other |

| **Regarding the TIMING of your event** |
| **What season of the year did you conduct your** |

| **Regarding the FUNDING of your event** |
| **Did you charge admission for the event?** |

| **What attracted people to come?** |
| □ Deer | □ Turkey | □ Waterfowl |
| □ Salmon | □ Trout | □ Bass |
| **Was competition involved?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |
| **Were door prizes utilized?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |
| **Are door prizes important?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Comments:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| **Regarding the use of FOOD at the event** |
| **Did you use food as part of the draw?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |

| **How important is the use of food to the success of the event?** |
| □ Slight | □ Moderate | □ High |

| **Was the dinner:** |
| □ Carry-in style meal? | □ Catered? |

| **Did the event utilize any wild game?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |

| **If Yes above, did this contribute to the draw of the event?** |
| □ Yes | □ No |

| **Which of the following food did you serve?** |
| □ None | □ Snack | □ Full meal |

---

Jack McCullough  
PO Box 290  
Monroe, IA 50170
Outdoor Research Questionnaire

---

**event?**
- Fall
- Winter
- Spring
- Summer

**Do you recommend this time of year for such an event?**
- Yes
- No

**Did you choose this event to coincide with a particular season?**
- No
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Other Specify:

**What day of the week is best?**
- Weekday
- Saturday
- Sunday
- Other

**Why?**

**What time of the day is best?**
- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening

**Was this an all day or longer event?**
- Yes
- No

---

**Regarding the PURPOSE of your event**

**What was the main purpose of the event?**
- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Pre-evangelism
- Other Specify:

**Comments:**

**Was this event successful in its purpose?**
- Yes
- No

**Comments:**

---

**Regarding the LOCATION of this event**

**This event was conducted in:**
- Church Building
- Rented Facility
- Outdoors
- Other

**What is the best place for this event?**
- Church Building
- Rented Facility
- Outdoors
- Other Specify:

**Comments:**

---

**Did you receive a collection to defer cost?**
- Yes
- No

**If you received a collection, what percent of the expenses did it cover?**
- 25%
- 50%
- 75%
- 100%

**Did you budget money for this event?**
- Yes
- No

**Comments on Funding:**

---

**Regarding the SUCCESS of the event**

**Did this event accomplish your purposes?**
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

**This event was:**
- Successful
- Unsuccessful

**How many attended your event?**
- 100
- 200-300
- 400-500
- 500-750
- 750-1000
- 1000+

**We will do this event again:**
- Annually
- Bi-annually
- Never

**We recommend others do similar events?**
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

**Were people saved at your event?**
- Yes
- No
- If yes, how many?

**What other commitments did you seek?**
- Christian Life
- Membership
- Other

**If you used an invitation, what format?**
- Hands raised
- Card completed
- Asked people to go to a separate place

**Were you able to follow up with those who made decisions?**
- Yes
- No

**How did you follow up with these people?**
- Personally
- E-mail
- Letter
- Phone call
- Literature furnished

**Were you able to maintain contact with those who attended for future ministry?**
- No
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

**Has your church/organization grown as a result of this ministry?**
- Yes
- No
Outdoor Research Questionnaire

How important is the location?
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

Regarding the SPEAKER at this event

Was the speaker an expert in one of the following areas?
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Other

Was the main speaker a pastor?
- Yes
- No

Was the speaker a believer?
- Yes
- No

Did the speaker present the gospel or fulfill the purpose of the event?
- Slight
- Moderate
- High

What remuneration did you furnish?
- Required Fee
- Expenses
- Honorarium

How did you locate your speaker?
- Recommended
- Web search
- Other

Comments:

Closing Comments

What we did well that worked:

Mistakes we made:

Things we would do next time:

Other Comments:

THANK YOU!

Submit Reset
Appendix F

These questions were used in personal interviews and with focus groups. The individuals interviewed and who were involved with the focus groups included those who had experience and involvement with outdoor ministry. They included pastors, professionals, and committee leaders. These interviews were recorded on a cassette tape player, and then transcribed for the reference work.

1. What is your name, your organization, and the name of your event?
2. Where do you conduct your event?
3. What is the normal focus of your event? Hunting a specific species? Fishing? Other?
4. What is the timing of your event? Does it coincide with the opening of a specific season such as hunting or fishing season? How often do you conduct your event?
5. Do you serve food at your event? What kind? How important is it to the event’s draw and success? Comments?
6. How do you find a speaker for your event? Do you choose only to have a pastor or a full time Christian worker? Comments?
8. Is the focus of your event evangelism? Discipleship? Other?
9. How many attend your event? How many are un-churched or guests?
10. Do you expect people to commit to Christ? For salvation? For life commitments? Do they respond in these ways? How many normally respond?
11. How many of these events have your conducted? Will you do such events again?
Do you recommend other ministries conducting this type event? For what purposes?


13. Do you utilize door prizes, gifts, or drawings for the event? How important are these to the promotion of the event and its success? Are these donated? Purchased?

14. Is your event successful? How should one measure success in this type event?

15. Do you recommend that others conduct such events for the purposes of evangelism and/or discipleship? Is either more suited to this style event? How much of a recommendation would you give? A little? Some? Moderate? Highly recommend?
“Back in 1991 we simply altered our father-son theme to a men and boys wild game night and it was an immediate success. We were a small country church and 40 men and boys were great. We recorded each guest and sent personal invitations for the following year. Not only did they bring food, we asked them to bring mounts and other interesting items. Our church becomes an outdoors museum and creates enthusiasm. We also have close out sportsman items to give away (for all interests) as well as solicit larger items for special prizes from local sporting goods retailers (a formal request letter is usually requested). Eight years later we doubled the size of our fellowship hall to accommodate 200 and added many new Sunday School rooms. The last few years we have limited our guests to the immediate area of our church, and have reserved seating.”

“It got non-church hunters involved.”

We had “door prizes, interesting speaker with visual aids, a taxidermist present with displays, a variety of foods (wild game and ‘normal’), and people donated the food.”

“Do what you do with excellence. Choose the speaker carefully. Work on existing friendships.”

“We do not advertise this event to other churches for fear of drawing other church people. Our Sportsman’s Dinner is by invitation from our churched people to their un-churched friends and work associates. The only exception we make is to other churches wanting to send some people to find out how to do a similar dinner event in their church.”

“One. Pre-registering for attendance, but we still expect a lot of walk-ins. Two. We also have our ladies make pies to serve for dessert. Three. Start your planning early. Four. Prayer is important. Five. You need to anticipate ladies who attend as well. Six. Have a good emcee to keep the flow moving along.”

“Getting the meal served quickly so scores of hungry men are not left sitting at their tables watching a painfully slow process of people being served.”

“It is a free dinner. Everyone gets a door prize. We have a big prize given at the end to hold people through the Gospel presentation part.”

The following worked well for us. “Lots of mounts for decorations. Working with the local BassPro Shop, lots of door prizes distributed quickly. An experienced presenter. An efficient food service, served family style.”
“We have events on weekends – away from home, so that people don’t leave after the outdoor activity, but stay to hear the main ministry.”

“We brought in local game/sports outfitters and asked them to set up booths. They gave away guided trips and etc.”

We gave “small door prizes related to deer or turkey hunting.”

“Attracting un-churched men.”

Referring to the event, “It was an ice breaker to many who attended.”

“We had the Albia (Lovestuen) Buck that really attracted a lot of people and we could schedule showings with the Gospel presented each time.”

We “had less items of wild game and more quantity as compared to our first year. We also sell most of our tickets by word of mouth. We do advertise locally but 90% of our tickets were sold word of mouth.”

“Our meals are among the best for this type of event. We personally cook, grill, bake, and serve a wide variety of wild game dishes. Our presentation of the Gospel is solid and our seminars are so popular that guests want to be able to attend more than one. Our door prizes are first class.”

Mistakes We Made

“Don’t have one in August. It was too busy a time of the year. January or February worked best for us.”

We made a mistake in “Inviting a semi-professional who required a fee and demanded to display goods for sale. We felt our purposes were compromised by the commercial aspect.

We had “too small a vision to start.”

Our mistake was “Trying to connect with total strangers, expecting them to connect with us.”

“Follow up. We have tried to contact those who have made decision but in the past this has been the weak part of our event. This past year, I delegated a team of people to develop a follow-up plan and we felt we made some progress.”

“Sometimes we don’t set up enough tables and chairs to handle the walk-in crowd.”

Our mistake was “Allowing a speaker to go twice as long as he should have.”

“We had a speaker once who did not relate to the people before going right into a hellfire and brimstone message. This turned people off.”
“At the beginning our profession card was not clear. We seek to improve it each year.”

“The meal should have been served earlier. We needed more time for viewing displays.”

“It is a constant learning adventure.”

“Failure to plan ahead two to three years in advance, always, will leave you in a bind for speakers. After fifteen years, there are plenty of areas to improve.”

“We had it in our gym. If I did it again I would like to do it in an outdoor venue.”

“Our mistake was “holding it in church, and we did not leave enough time for publicity.”

“We held it outside on a rainy day.”

We “didn’t open the event up to the ladies.”

“Not advertising one time in the paper. It made a huge difference.”

“We need more workers to help with the tear down and clean up.”

“Hiring outside speakers has been a consistent disaster. Not all of them were nearly as clear on the Gospel as they needed to be. Many weren’t that interesting except on their small area of expertise.”

Things we could do better the next time.

“I would have more guys involved in the planning. It gets too much for me doing much of the planning.”

“One of the requests we are contemplating is a father-daughter event similar to the men and boys, but it would not take the place of the men and boys event (we would be run out of town).”

We would “get a popular speaker and promote more.”

“Make the event for a smaller group for more personal attention.”

We would “make a stronger emphasis on salvation.”

We would “work on making more friendships and inviting existing contacts.”

We would “possibly do 2 Sportsman’s events – one in the fall when men and women are gearing up for the coming season. The only problem here is that the schools and church calendars are in high demand during the same time. This is why we stayed with the winter-spring months when guys are getting ‘cabin fever.””
We would do “better with publicity in advertising the event by utilizing a broader base than just our church family.”

We would “plan better, advertise better, do an off site activity with more hands on stuff.”

“We want to add special music, pledges, and more display space.”

“This year our goal is not to just visit the ones making professions of faith, but everyone that attends. We average 150.”

We would “add breakout seminars before the meal.”

“Follow-up is always a challenge. Just because they come, that does not mean they want you to come to their house. Men are more open during a crisis, or through repeated relationships.”

“We would advertise about two months prior and step up advertising as the event neared.”

“Incorporate more and better door prizes.”

“Invite the ladies at the next fishing tournament.”

“Begin with meeting your men for prayer and help them pray over who they should contact. This should be started at least three months before the event.”

We need to “involve more people in administration.”

Closing Comments from Responders

“This event has become the major event for our men and boys to invite unsaved friends, and they usually come.”

“We did get local hunters to donate to the church, so this opened the doors for future events.”

“In South Florida fishing and hunting is year around and people have a great interest in these activities. We use large group events to create smaller affinity groups for later discipleship and fellowship.”

“Some excellent speakers price themselves out of the range of a small church like ours (100 in the congregation). $750 plus traveling expenses I think is too much.”

“Events are effective only if used in conjunction with existing relationships. They will almost never initiate a new relationship. Events are good. Relationships are essential. The all-year-long effort needs to be making friendships on purpose for evangelism.”
“Sportsman’s Dinners are not to be looked at the primary evangelistic event of the year. I am finding that in order to break down barriers with un-churched men and women, that there needs to be ‘waves’ of entry point events. My goal is to have the un-churched person meet church people and have a good time. We follow up this event with a spring golf outreach or some other evangelistic event. You never know which event will be the one to tip the scales in the mind of a person looking for hope.”

“It is a great outreach that has good potential. It appears to be good way to build relationships and for pre-evangelism.”

“Be sure to build something in your lobby area to attract attention to the event and sign up people. Kids love it!”

“I think that with my ministry I will try to achieve a ‘pep talk’ for Christian men and women as well as a clear presentation of the Gospel. Many of these people are Christians bringing friends and their lives can be touched also.”

“Our difficulty is having an individual who will really take ownership of leading this.”

“We do a variety of outdoor activities and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ at each event. We do an invitation at each event.”

It “birthed our hunting program, Adventure Bound Outdoors.” (This comment is from Pastor Chuck McAllister, pastor of The Church at Crossgate Center, and host of Adventure Bound Outdoors, a program that airs on the Outdoor Life Network.)

“I am not sure the big event can be sustained. I think smaller events may have more impact and you can customize them to a more particular kind of sport.”

“Hunters are a highly un-evangelized group. They need to see that church welcomes ‘real men’ like them in more than just an annual event.”
Appendix H

An Outline for Planning an Event

1 Purpose it.
   A. Who are the targets of the event? (Congregation, community, core?)
   B. What is my main purpose? (Evangelism, pre-evangelism, discipleship?)
   C. Where will the attendees come from? (Church, community, how far?)
   D. When will I conduct this event? (Include this in the statement.)
   E. How will I conduct this event? (Donations, employees, staff, combination of these?)
   F. (Write out your purpose statement here. Make sure it is concise, clear, and communicable.)

2 Picture it.
   A. Who will attend? (Community, committed, core?)
   B. What will it look like? (Place, decorations, displays, set up of the vendor booths, set up of food service, etc.)
   C. Where? (Define, describe, and decide on what type of facility you need.)
   D. When will you perform it? (Season of the year, hunting or fishing season, in between seasons?)
   E. How will you perform it? (Mentally envision how things will be done.)

3 Plan it.
   A. Prayer. (See 5 below).
   B. Type of Event.
      1. Game Dinner? (A once annual event?)
      2. Rendezvous? (Monthly? At least regularly?)
      3. Challenge Event? (Random as needed? Using competition.)
      4. Other type of event.
   C. Team. (Make a list of all team members with appropriate contact information to include phone numbers and email addresses.)
      1. Chair?
      2. Vice Chair?
      3. Secretary?
      4. Treasurer?
      5. Members at large?
      6. Make a flow chart of responsibilities to be delegated.
   D. Theme of the event. (Decide if the focus will be on hunting or some other outdoor/sports activity. This will affect many things that follow.)
      1. Hunting?
      2. Fishing?
      3. Other sport?
E. Time.
1. Date?
2. Time of day?
3. Duration of the event? (All day event? Afternoon event? Evening only event? Weekend event?)

F. Location.
1. Who?
   a) Who is the primary point of contact for the facility?
   b) Who is the secondary point of contact for the facility?
   c) Who will maintain the rest rooms during the event?
   d) Who will plan the layout for the event in the facility?
   e) Who will plan and coordinate the set up of the event?
   f) Who will plan and coordinate the tear down of the event?
   g) Who will review the contract for the event? (A strong recommendation is presented here for a contract to be signed if any outside facility is used!)
   h) Who provides the insurance coverage?
      (1) Churches need to be sure they are covered for such ministries.
      (2) Often special riders are available for these off site events.
      (3) **To neglect having adequate insurance coverage is bad stewardship!**

2. What?
   a) What type of a facility is it?
   b) This may impact upon lots of areas for planning.
   c) What does the facility require?
      (1) Payment details?
      (2) Proof of insurance?
      (3) Is payment of their staff required?
   d) Do you have to use their food service? (This is more common than many realize.)
   e) What does the facility furnish?
      (1) Do they furnish security?
      (2) Do they pay for trash removal?
      (3) Do they maintain the restrooms during the event?
      (4) Do they furnish staff while the event is being conducted to provide help and assistance?

3. Where?
   a) What is the name of the facility?
   b) Where is it located? (Give the physical location as an address, and list contact information.)

4. When?
   a) When are the dates of the event?
   b) When may we access the building?
   c) When do we have to be out of the building?

   a) How many will it accommodate?
   b) How will we park the vehicles?
   c) How will we secure the facility?
   d) How will we provide emergency medical care?

G. Program.
1. Speaker/presenters?
   a) Keynote speaker?
      (1) Who?
      (2) Honorarium?
      (3) Travel plans and expenses?
         (a) Airline tickets?
         (b) Rental car/other transportation needed?
         (c) Room?
         (d) Food?
         (e) Will they need a booth for a display?
         (f) Host for the speaker? (Pick up at the airport, travel to the event, provision for meals, and welcome to the area.)
   b) Seminar presenters and other speakers?
      (1) Who? Who will be the presenter(s)?
      (2) What?
         (a) What subjects will they address?
         (b) What equipment will they need?
         (c) Will they need a booth for a display?
      (3) When?
         (b) When will they present their topic?
         (c) How much time will they have?
         (d) Where?
         (e) Where will they present?
      (4) How? How will they present?
         (a) Will they lecture?
         (b) Will they use a book? (May need to be copied?)
         (c) Will they use visuals?
      (5) Honorarium?
         (b) Travel plans and expenses?
         (c) Host for the speaker? (Pick up at the airport, travel to the event, provision for meals, and welcome to the area.)
   c) Who will emcee the event?

2. Media equipment?
   a) Technician. Who? (In some public venues a paid professional from their staff is required!)
b) Do you need to rent any equipment? (If so, what, from where, who will do it, when will it be delivered, who will set it up, and what capability will be needed?)

c) Music? (Will you use music or other recorded sounds? If so, consider the Who, What, When, Where, How, questions for this subject.)

d) Specify details as to the set up, operation, and tear down of this equipment.

H. Funding.

1. Who?

a) Who will design a budget for this event?

b) Who will pay for the event?

   (1) Church?
   (2) Sponsors? Donors?
   (3) Admission? (What part of the costs will this cover?)

2. What?

a) What are other sources of financial help?

b) What checks must be written?

3. Where?

a) Where do we send the payments?

4. When?

a) When will the funds be needed?

b) When will the funds be available?

c) When must the facility rental be paid? (Some facilities require a substantial down payment at booking, which may be done years or months in advance of the event.)

d) When must the printing and other costs be paid?

e) When are the travel expenses due to presenters and speakers?

   (1) Do they pay and then get reimbursed?
   (2) Do we pay these costs up front?

5. How?

a) Will the event be free of charge? (Research shows that some strongly believe no charge or collection should be used!)

b) Will we charge admission?

c) Will we receive an offering or donations?

d) Will we solicit donations?

e) Will we accept donations or cover the costs?

f) How will reimbursements be handled? What forms will be used to substantiate these expenses?

I. Food.

1. Who?

a) Who will be in charge of the food?

b) Who will determine the menu?
c) Who will do the cooking?
d) Who will make a list of the food needed?
e) Who will purchase the food needed?
f) Who will receive the food when it is delivered?
g) Who will prepare the food for cooking?
h) Who will provide the desserts?
i) Who will serve the food?
j) Who will set up for the food service?
k) Who will tear down after the event?
l) Who will return any rental equipment, or arrange for it?

2. What?
   a) What food will you serve?
      (1) Snack?
      (2) Meal?
      (b) Main food?
      (c) Beverages?
      (d) Desserts?
      (e) Rolls?
      (f) Condiments?
      (g) Butter?
   b) Will the food be catered or will a carry in be used?

3. When? (Set up the timing for coordinating the food.)
   a) When will the food be ordered?
   b) When will the food be delivered?
   c) When will it be prepared for cooking?
   d) When will the cooking begin?
   e) When will it need to be ready?
   f) When will it be served?

4. Where?
   a) Where will the food be delivered?
   b) Where will the food be prepared for cooking?
   c) Where will the food be cooked?
   d) Where will the food be served?

J. Promotion/publicity.
1. Who?
   a) Who will be the person in charge?
   b) Who will assist?
   c) Who has contacts to help in this vital area?

2. What?
   a) Newspapers?
b) Broadcast media?
   (1) Use Community announcement forums.
   (2) Purchase air time?
       (a) How much air time?
       (b) What is the best use of the budget?

c) Internet?

d) Literature? (This needs more lead time than others.)

e) Other? (List these resources.)

3. When?
   a) Work out the best details and time lines to meet the
      deadlines of the various providers.
   b) Plan the printing, artwork, design, and final deadline for
      these.

4. Where?
   a) Will you need to provide a location for a press release or
      for a press conference?
   b) Where will you need to travel to provide information to
      television or radio stations? Many television stations will
      give air time or interviews without charge for special
      events if you will travel to their studios to record the
      programming.
   c) List addresses, and other contact information for all of the
      providers in this area.

5. How? Consider the means of publicity. This could be multi-
   faceted.

K. Door prizes/give aways.
1. Who?
   a) Who is the main person in charge of this vital area?
   b) Who are donors? Who might be possible sources of free
      materials for give aways?
   c) Who might underwrite some or all of these costs?
   d) Who will receive and store these materials?
   e) Who will transport and organize them the day of the event?
   f) Who will send a thank you for the donations?

2. What?
   a) What will be the main door prize(s)?
   b) What is the budget for door prizes and give aways?
   c) What are the rules? (Must you be present? What about
      staff? Can they receive door prizes?)
   d) What special equipment will we need? (Some use a drum
      or similar item to pick the cards for the prizes.)
   e) What other things would we give away?
   f) What will we purchase?
   g) What legal issues might be raised? (Most states have
      specific laws that apply. Some places require licenses, and
proof that the door prizes were given without discrimination.)

h) What consideration will be given to those that donate items?

3. Where?
   a) Where will we request these items and materials? (Make a list of former and potential sponsors.)
   b) Where will we receive these materials?
   c) Where will we store these materials?
   d) Where will we secure these items the day of the event?

4. When?
   a) When will we begin to request these things?
   b) When will we purchase or order the things we buy?
   c) When will we distribute the door prizes and give aways? (All day? At registration? At the dinner? After the dinner?) After the meal is best from the research.

5. How?
   a) How will you request these items?
      (1) In person? (This is the best, but you should have an official letter of request in hand to give them.)
      (2) Letter? (Many companies will need a letter of request from the sponsoring organization before they can donate.)
      (3) Phone call?
      (4) Internet contact?
      b) Spell out the process for distributing the give aways.
      c) Who will handle this?

L. Tickets.
1. Who?
   a) Who will design them?
   b) Who will get them printed, if necessary?
   c) Who will distribute them?
   d) Who will sell them?

2. What?
   a) What do we want to do with them?
   b) What text and logo will be on them?
   c) Do they need to be uniquely numbered?

3. Where?
   a) Can we purchase them?
   b) Are pre-made tickets available?
   c) If they need to be printed, where can we order them?

4. When do we need them?
   a) Do we need them ahead of time?
   b) How much ahead of time?
   c) When will we put them on sale? Or make them available?

5. How?
a) Will we sell them or give them away?
b) How will we sell them? (In person? As a block? Using a PayPal account? Commercial vendors? By mail?)
c) How will we distribute them?
d) Will we give complimentary tickets? How will this be handled?
e) What about discounts? (Make those choices and spell out the decision.)
f) How many shall we print? How many shall we sell?

M. Decision Cards?
1. Who?
a) Who will design these cards?
b) Who will see to the printing?
c) Who will gather the cards?
d) Who will tally and analyze the cards?
e) Who will utilize them for the follow up?
2. What?
a) What is the purpose of these cards?
b) What information will they request?
c) What decisions are you expecting?
3. Where?
a) Where will the completed cards be evaluated?
b) Where will the information be used?
4. When?
a) When will the cards be distributed?
b) When will the cards be completed by the attendees?
c) When will they be collected?
5. How?
a) How will the cards be used?
b) How will they be distributed? Collected?
c) How will the results be tallied?
d) How will the cards be used for follow up?

N. Follow up.
(This area is vital to ongoing discipleship with the respondents.)
1. Who?
a) Who will accept responsibility for follow up?
b) Who will make the initial contact?
c) Who will continue the contact?
d) Who will decide on the materials needed?
e) Who will buy them?
2. What?
a) What will be done to determine each person’s needs?
b) What materials will you use?
c) What method will you use? (Correspondence course? Personal study? Group study?)
3. When?
a) When will you follow up?
b) What is the most immediate date for follow up?

4. Where?
a) Will you use a church for this purpose?
b) Will you travel to the respondent’s home?

5. How?
a) How will you distribute these materials?
b) How will you pay for follow up materials?
c) Will you have a personal contact? A visit? A phone call?
d) Will you pass the cards to a specific local church? Are they willing to do this vital work? (Caution! Don’t assume they are.)
e) How can you continue to disciple each person?

O. Evaluation.
1. Who?
a) Set a time to get the whole team together.
b) Give the speakers and presenters a sheet to complete, asking for suggestions.

2. What?
a) Go over each area of the planning, asking questions, verbally addressing the following things.
b) What did we do well?
c) What did we do poorly? (Identify perceived mistakes).
d) What did we forget to do?
e) What can we do better next time?

3. When? Set a time for the evaluation meeting.
4. Where? Set a location for the meeting.
5. How?
a) Will you use a team meeting?

4 Process it.
(The point of this step is to achieve understanding and the commitment of those who will perform the event. It is a mistake to avoid this step and just decree that certain things will be done. Process is the involvement of people so they take emotional ownership of the event, its importance, and their part in it.)

A. Who?
1. Involve the leadership of the church.
2. Involve key lay people who have skills and passion for this event.
3. Then share with larger groups, especially with those who will help conduct the event.
4. Share it with the whole church. (This is not for an opinion pole, but an opportunity for them to commit to the event after time to process all that will need to take place for success.)

B. What?
1. Share the picture God has given for the event.
2. Share your passion for this event. (If you don’t have passion for it, forget about it. If you are not passionate, identify someone who does have the fire within to accomplish it. Support and give them all the resources you can give them!)
3. Share the purpose.
4. Share the goal and target of the event.
5. Share the general planning of the event.
6. Share the scriptural authority for the event.

C. When?
1. Allow a lot of time for God to move in hearts.
2. Set up special meetings for this purpose. (A meal where you can have their undivided attention as a group is a great idea!)
3. One on one sharing is essential, especially to the real leaders in the group.

D. Where?
1. Decide on a place.
2. Pick a place with privacy and without distractions.

E. How?
1. Person to person is best. This does not eliminate group meetings.
2. A letter will not have the same appeal or effect that a personal meeting and appeal will have.

5 Pray for it.
A. Who?
1. Personal prayer is a must. The vision/picture should be born out of prayer and time in the Word of God.
2. Key prayer partners.
   a) Many of us have these people who pray for us.
   b) Recruit others to join in the prayer for the event.
3. The Team.
   a) Joint sessions of prayer meld and mold the team to God’s plans and purposes for the event.
4. The whole staff of the event.
5. The whole church.

B. What?
1. Bathe everything in prayer.
2. Especially pray in order to prepare for the spiritual warfare that Satan will prosecute against you. He does not give up his people easily. Phi 4:6-7; 2 Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:10-19.

C. When?
1. The pastor/leader must be in prayer personally. Others too, must pray personally for the victory.
2. The leadership should pray at scheduled times together.
3. Schedule special prayer meetings beginning months in advance.
4. Set aside a room for praying at the event. (Recruit and delegate volunteers to be in prayer during the event, especially during the speaker’s time.)

D. Where?
1. The location of praying or of a prayer meeting does not matter. It is the fact of the prayer and the way it moves God to action that is important.
2. Pray without ceasing supposes we can pray anywhere, any time.
3. Set up a prayer room at the event if at all possible.

6 Perform it.
A. List here anything you can think of that has not been considered, planned for, or delegated above)
B. Just do it. God will bless you for the work you have invested. He will make up for any inadequacies of any and all men. He will bless your effort if you have done it for his glory.
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